The Dissertation Committee for Laura Ashley Squires Certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

Religious Healing in the Progressive Era: Literary Responses to Christian Science

Committee:

Phillip Barrish, Co-Supervisor

Brian Bremen, Co-Supervisor

Thomas Tweed

Gretchen Murphy

Coleman Hutchinson

Religious Healing in the Progressive Era: Literary Responses to Christian Science

by

Laura Ashley Squires, B.A., M.A.

Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2012

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my co-chairs, Brian Bremen and Phillip Barrish, for shepherding this project along from the very beginning. Their direct but always generous feedback has kept me honest and kept me going throughout this process. I also thank my committee members, Gretchen Murphy, Coleman Hutchison, and Thomas Tweed for graciously lending their expertise. Evan Carton, Michael Winship, and Christopher Ellison also kindly read early drafts of individual chapters. The Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity was critical in certain areas of research, and I am immensely grateful to Judy Huenneke, Kurt Morris, Amanda Gustin, and the rest of the archive staff for their accommodation and consummate professionalism. Sherry Darling was also an indispensible resource during the process of identifying relevant materials and submitting a fellowship application and generously provided a public forum for research fellows to test out some early findings.

Finally, I wish to thank my family, particularly my husband Edmond, who has endured the graduate school process without complaint for seven years, eagerly providing emotional support as well as a sounding board for ideas. My parents and sisters have also been critical interlocutors throughout my life. I have no doubt that our breakfast table discussions have prepared me for the dissertation defense and worse. And without their wildly overenthusiastic estimation of my intellectual abilities, I might never have attempted the PhD in the first place.

Religious Healing in the Progressive Era: Literary Responses to Christian Science

Laura Ashley Squires, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2012

Supervisors: Philip Barrish & Brian Bremen

This project examines the impact of Christian Science on American culture through the interventions of three major literary figures—Mark Twain, Willa Cather, and Theodore Dreiser—in the major debates that surrounded the movement. I argue that both Christian Science itself and the backlash against it were responses to the shifting conditions of modern life, that Christian Science and public discourse on it laid bare distinctly modern tensions and anxieties about changes in U.S. culture. Recent scholarship has pointed to the durability of the secularization thesis in the study of American literature despite the easily discernible impact of religion on American culture more broadly throughout the history of the U.S. This critical perspective has been particularly difficult to dismantle in the study of post-Civil War American literature. While it is true that Protestant Christianity lost some of its dominance in the late nineteenth century, this period also saw the rise of various influential heterodox religious groups, including Christian Science. This dissertation will make sense of why and how Christian Science captured the imaginations of so many Americans, including some of the greatest storytellers of the day. Christian Science was not the story of how a group of deluded fanatics attempted to turn back the tide of modernity. Instead, Christian Science was a product of modernity that provided a unique and, in its particular context,

scientifically plausible response to the problem of human suffering. Furthermore, the controversies that surrounded Christian Science crystallized anxieties about the fate of individual autonomy in the modern U.S., the exercise of therapeutic and religious freedom, the concentration of individual wealth and power among a privileged few, the extension of American power abroad, and sexuality. Each chapter will examine a narrative or set of narratives that demonstrate how the Christian Science debates heightened and spoke to those concerns.

Table of Contents

Introduction

As the twentieth century dawned, participation in a movement called the Church of Christ, Scientist was growing exponentially, faster, some claimed, than any other religious sect in the U.S.[1] Founded and led by a woman named Mary Baker Eddy and headquartered in the heart of Boston's Back Bay (where the Mother Church still stands), Christian Scientists held that physical matter was an illusion, that the only reality was the reality of the mind. The movement penetrated nearly every tier of American society and impacted the lives and careers of some of the nation's most prominent men and women of letters, who, for various reasons, were inspired to comment on the controversies surrounding the movement and its enigmatic founder. For some, Christian Science represented the height of human evolutionary progress, while for others it was the basest form of superstition, the remnant of a less enlightened age.

Building on other extant theories about the interactions between mind and body, Christian Scientists claimed to be able to heal themselves and others through the realization that God had created the world to be perfect and free of suffering and that disease and injury were merely illusions produced by erroneous beliefs in the primacy of matter. Mary Baker Eddy distilled these theories into a book called *Science and Health, with Key to Scriptures,* which remains today, along with the Bible, the religious group's sacred text. They established churches across the nation and even abroad,[2] treating people

[1] Some contemporary observers claimed that there were one million Christian Scientists in the U.S. in 1899, but most scholarly accounts agree that this estimate was wildly exaggerated. Exact figures are difficult to come by, because the church never kept precise membership numbers. See Schoepflin, p. 115-17.

[2] Christian Science achieved a particularly prominent presence in Great Britain, Belgium, Germany, France, and Scandinavia. In fact, Lord Dunmore, a peer of Britain, was a member of the Board of Directors of the Mother Church. In February 1900, the *Chicago Tribune* reported that Emperor Wilhelm and his consort had converted to Christian Science.

with infirmities ranging from alcoholism and depression to consumption and paralysis. A number of highly educated individuals found this notion that many sicknesses might primarily be products of the mind persuasive and saw continuity between the theories of Mrs. Eddy and the age of scientific discoveries in which they were living. As Carol Norton declared in an 1899 lecture in Concord, New Hampshire:

> We live in an era of progress, scientific development, and mental expansion. In the universe of Mind new worlds are being constantly discovered. The psychological unfolding of mentality is world-wide. Universal consciousness is throwing aside its swaddling clothes. The ghostly shapes of religious superstition, medical vagaries, and absurd and materialistic scientific speculations are fast being relegated to the realm of oblivion. Divine rationality, demonstrable religion, and scientific mental therapeutics are assuming their rightful place as the righteous rulers of this world. (3)

However, because Christian Scientists held decidedly heterodox religious beliefs, shunned all regular medical treatment and encouraged new converts to do the same, those who did not find their claims immediately compelling tended to regard them as a public menace and Mrs. Eddy herself as a particularly pernicious brand of charlatan. Indeed, many feared the powerful international organization she had created, believing, as Samuel Clemens did, that Christian Science was poised to rival the Roman Catholic Church and that Eddy was a would-be religious despot looking to hurl Western civilization back into the Dark Ages.

By the turn of the century, public interest in Christian Science had become especially intense thanks to a number of high-profile events. Throughout the winter of 1898 and 1899, *The New York Times* reported on the death of novelist Harold Frederic, who passed away under the care of his mistress Kate Lyon and Christian Science practitioner Athalie Mills. Lyon and Mills were tried for manslaughter, though the case was dismissed for lack of evidence. Nevertheless, the death of such a high profile

individual and the prosecution of his caregivers gave momentum to an ongoing effort on the part of doctors and other members of the professional scientific community to curtail the activities of Christian Scientists by pressing for criminal convictions and lobbying for licensing laws that would make its practice illegal regardless of whether or not harm was done.[3] Efforts to create such laws in Massachusetts in 1899 were opposed by prominent public figures like William Lloyd Garrison, son of the famous abolitionist, who testified before a legislative committee that "to narrow the service which offers itself for the healing of humanity by such devices as the one proposed is to retard the growth of true science and keep longer in use old methods which have had their day" (Qtd. in Norton 4).[4]

During the summer of 1899, newspapers and medical journals alike were reporting on the libel suit brought against Mrs. Eddy by Josephine Woodbury, a former leader in the Christian Science church, hoping that the case might finally bring hidden facts about Eddy to light and rid the world of her bothersome movement once and for all. Woodbury and her lawyer, Frederick Peabody, would both achieve considerable fame for their public opposition to Mrs. Eddy and her organization. They would both correspond with Samuel Clemens, who, from 1898-99, was working on a series of essays and stories about Christian Science, some of which would eventually be published in 1902 in *Cosmopolitan* and *North American Review* and as a book called *Christian Science* in 1907. In those writings, Clemens would develop his thoughts about the increasingly

[3] That same month, Major Cecil Lester, an instructor at the Sandhurst Royal Military College also died under the care of Christian Science practitioner named Mrs. Grant. Lester was suffering from terminal tuberculosis at the time of his death. The case was often reported in tandem with Frederic's. See "Christian Science and Death" and "Unchristian Noscience."

[4] Garrison testified before the legislature again on this matter in 1907: "As a citizen of the commonwealth who believes in individual freedom and abhors paternalism, I come to protest against the bills proposed for your consideration. It asks that a fallible body of interested persons shall be given the monopoly of the professional treatment of disease in Massachusetts. A special privilege is demanded" ("Bills").

imperialistic policies of the United States and the gradual decline of genuine democracy, a sickness of which Christian Science, he thought, was a symptom. In fact, his story, "The Secret History of Eddypus, World Empire," a dystopian narrative in which Christian Science becomes the dominant world religion that supersedes all governments, was intended to be a sequel to *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court.*

Demand for material about Christian Science would result in numerous attempts by journalists to investigate and expose Eddy's organization. In 1899, the *New York World* sent a reporter to take classes in Mrs. Eddy's school (in a fashion similar to Nellie Bly's infiltration of an insane asylum) in order to expose the absurdities of her teachings. The most prominent of these attempts to shine a light on Mrs. Eddy, however, was a sensational biography of Mrs. Eddy, published serially in *McClure's* during 1907 and 1908. The series was written by a young journalist named Georgine Milmine and edited by Willa Cather at the very beginning of her tenure at *McClure's* and of her literary career. (Woodbury and Peabody were also principle informants for the *McClure's* project.) It was through this project that Willa Cather came into contact with some of her most important literary influences—including Sarah Orne Jewett—and honed her skills as both an editor and a writer. *McClure's* and those who supported the project hoped that this expose would do to Christian Science what Ida Tarbell's series on Rockefeller had done to Standard Oil: reveal the corruption at the heart of the enterprise. Later efforts to claim that Willa Cather had actually authored the piece after the novelist had achieved widespread fame for her fiction may have been a part of the effort to give *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy* an aura of credibility. Also in 1907, Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* instigated a lawsuit against the Church of Christ, Scientist that placed the question of Mrs. Eddy's mental competence at the center of its argument. Largely in response to Pulitzer's crusade and the pervasiveness of anti-Christian Science sentiment in the media,

Mrs. Eddy directed the Christian Science Publishing Society—which already published three periodicals in addition to works by Mrs. Eddy and other major figures in the movement—to begin publishing a daily newspaper, *The Christian Science Monitor*, which would go on to become a bastion of mainstream international journalism over the next century and garner Pulitzer prizes of its own. And elsewhere in New York City, Theodore Dreiser, then editor of *The Delineator*, was visiting a Christian Scientist with his wife, developing an interest that he would talk about explicitly in the semi-autobiographical novel *The "Genius."* [5] Like Carol Norton, Dreiser would consider the possibility that Mrs. Eddy's teachings represented the very height of human development, the spiritual element that might complete the scientific work of the great naturalists.

In short, Christian Science was a highly visible phenomenon that touched many aspects of U.S. culture during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was at the center of public debates about the shape that the modern, legally regulated medical profession would eventually take for the next century and served as the occasion for much broader debates about therapeutic choice, religious freedom, and the right of the state to intervene in matters related to either medical care or religious practice. Led by a woman with awe-inspiring business acumen and force of personality, Christian Science was also a centerpiece in debates about the public role of women. An advertisement for the *McClure's* series on Mary Baker Eddy attests to the tremendous place she occupied in the public imagination:

> One of the most important, certainly the most interesting contributions to McClure's in 1907 will be the first life of Mrs. Mary Baker Glover Eddy, head of the Christian Science Church. She is the richest woman in the

[5] Dreiser's wife Sarah was interested in Christian Science, and toward the end of their years together, they visited a Christian Science practitioner in New York as contemporary couples visit a marriage counselor, according to Dreiser biographer Richard Lingemann. Two of Dreiser's sisters were also Christian Scientists, and one (Sylvia) was a practitioner.

> United States, who got her money by her own efforts; the most powerful American woman by all odds, easily the most famous; yet no one has ever before written the true story of her life. She is eighty-five years old, has been three times married; at fifty-five she was unknown and a dependent, and yet she has worked up a fortune which no one has been able quite to estimate, but which must be more than $3,000,000. She is the most absolute church head in the world, not even excepting the Pope. ("The Life of Mrs. Eddy")

Eddy's (often exaggerated) wealth and influence were often compared to business monopolies and triggered anxieties about the irresponsible use of power and the danger to freedom in a world of corporate trusts.

This project examines the impact of Christian Science on American culture through the interventions of major American literary voices in the debates that surrounded the movement. I argue that both Christian Science itself and the backlash against it were responses to the shifting conditions of modern life, that Christian Science and public discourse on it laid bare distinctly modern tensions and anxieties about changes in U.S. culture. Despite the significance of Christian Science in the Progressive Era U.S., it most certainly is not a significant part of the story we generally tell about the literature of the period. Though historians of religion have long been disassembling the secularization thesis, most of the field of post-Civil War American literature continues to regard the story of the nineteenth century as the story of the Puritan old guard giving way to a new era of secular, scientific rationality, a story in which religion simply ceased being a factor with any importance for the production and dissemination of literature.[6] While it is true that by the end of the nineteenth century, Protestant Christianity ceased to be the nearly singular medium through which U.S.-Americans—particularly intellectual elites—understood their world and their role in it, it is also true that this same period saw

[6] Challenges to the dominance of the secularization narrative in American literary history appear in Franchot and Brooks.

the proliferation and expansion of a variety of heterodox religious movements, of which Christian Science is a particularly interesting and successful example.

I also demonstrate that while these texts—Twain's various writings on Christian Science, the *McClure's* biography, and Dreiser's novel—occupy a marginal status in the canon of American literature, in their own time, each of these texts bore the burden of enormous cultural expectations. As certain elites (regular physicians, orthodox clergy, and many legislators, social activists, and journalists) sought to combat what they saw as the threat posed to human progress by Mary Baker Eddy and Christian Science, they naturally attempted to summon some of the most powerful voices in U.S. American culture in order to wipe this aberration from the landscape. As such, Mark Twain's tendency to vacillate between vitriol and sympathy in *Christian Science*, his willingness to take many of the claims of Christian Science as basically true, was severely disappointing for many who looked to him as an ally in the fight against Mary Baker Eddy. Furthermore, the case for Willa Cather's authorship of *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy* may have been part of an attempt to render more legitimate some of the biography's problematic methods and controversial claims. One might say that such a strategy largely worked given the book's status as ur-text for so many of the Eddy biographies and historical accounts of Christian Science that came after it. Appearing just a few years after Twain's articles had originally been published, many critics of Christian Science looked to the biography to do what the famous satirist had not. When major cultural figures like Twain did not adopt a uniformly critical stance toward Mrs. Eddy, the tendency was (and continue to be) to dismiss such as eccentricity. So bewildered were Dreiser's contemporaries, including H.L. Mencken, by the author's sympathetic treatment of Christian Science in *The "Genius"* that they ridiculed or ignored it. Despite the novel's incorporation of Eddy's famously asexual and moralistic philosophies into its

reflections on desire, sexuality, and human suffering, the legacy of the novel and the author continues to be seen in terms of the dualism of free expression versus religious moralizing. In other words, contemporary and current readers of these works have artificially fortified the basic assumptions of the secularization thesis by eliding these texts' ambivalent (and often supportive) treatment of Christian Science.

Chapter 1—The Falling Apple: The Rise of Christian Science and the Contest for Cultural Authority explains the history and central controversies surrounding Christian Science. I place the movement's growth in the context of the history of medicine in the U.S—which was in a dismal state in the middle of the nineteenth century and only began to achieve something like its modern, regulated form as Christian Science was gaining a following—and in the context of theories of body-mind interaction that were extant at the time of Mary Baker Eddy's "discovery." Finally, this chapter describes the major public debates that Eddy and her theories engendered, demonstrating that criticism of the movement did not *always* originate from disinterested commitment to scientific truth but was also the product of conflict among various competing interests with sometimes surprising motives at a time when proprietary ownership of the word "science" was very much up for grabs. The debates about how to deal with Christian Science were populated by a number of groups with competing claims to scientific validity and arguments about who, precisely, was allowed to "do" science. Christian Scientists saw themselves as participants in an active intellectual discussion about the state of medical care, not as dissenters from the aims of scientific discovery. This background will assist us in teasing out the nuances of both the supportive and critical narratives we will encounter in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2—A Demonstrative System of Healing: *The Christian Science Journal* and the Power of Narrative examines the healing and conversion narratives produced by Christian Scientists themselves. I argue that Christian Scientists achieved a following first and foremost because they managed to produce results that a great many people found credible. Reports of healing experiences, distilled, published, and disseminated in the form of coherent narratives were the greatest recruitment tools in the Christian Science arsenal. I use the body of theory known as Narrative Medicine to explain how Christian Science narratives fit within the medical context in which they were situated and satisfied the modern demand for "restitution," or the restoration of the body to its naturally healthy state through the application of the rational mind. I also use the framework of Arthur Frank's restitution or recovery narrative to determine and critique the limits of Christian Science narrative, which—like many modern discourses on health—lacked the vocabulary to help adherents deal with death or with chronic diseases that simply would not respond to Christian Science methods.

Chapter 3—The Nightmare of History: Mark Twain and the Limits of Demystification presents Mark Twain's writings on Christian Science. I demonstrate that his criticisms of Mary Baker Eddy originated not in an intellectual objection to her theories but in an abhorrence of her allegedly irresponsible use of power within her organization, a power he thought had the potential to expand well beyond the bounds of her church. In fact, unlike many of his contemporaries, Twain did not reduce the problem that the spread of Christian Science represented to a failure of the intellect or rationality. Rather, he incorporated Eddy and Christian Science throughout his later writings in his critique of the willingness of human beings as a whole—specifically his contemporaries—to cast their liberty aside for the sake of an idea, whether that idea be

Eddy's Christian Science or naïve patriotism. Twain's anti-Christian Science rhetoric, like that of many of his contemporaries, was also tinctured by a broader anti-Catholicism.

Chapter 4—The Standard Oil Treatment: Willa Cather, Georgine Milmine and *The Life of Mary Baker Eddy* brings new documentary evidence to bear on the authorship issues surrounding *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy*, the serial biography published in *McClure's* from 1907-1908. This biography is arguably one of the most important documents in the historiography of the movement, serving as it has as a basis for almost all subsequent investigations into Mrs. Eddy's life. The circumstances under which this text was created are, however, shrouded in myth, rumor, prejudice, and poor scholarship. In recent decades, Cather scholars have made a case for an idea that circulated as rumor in the years following the appearance of the series: that Cather was the actual or primary author. In fact, an edition of the biography released by the University of Nebraska in 1993 with Willa Cather listed as the primary author has served as the basis for all subsequent analysis of this text and, in some cases, is the only primary or secondary source cited when literary scholars mention Christian Science. As such, this chapter uses primary sources to illuminate the complex circumstances of the biography's production and the controversial claims that it made. I argue that the single-author framework through which the biography has been approached for the past thirty years has deprived us of the opportunity to engaged with a rich, symptomatic text that is less useful as a repository of truth than as key to understanding American culture in the early twentieth century. I also reconstruct the collaborative process that brought the biography into being. Though it was originally researched and written by a young Canadian journalist named Georgine Milmine, a team of editors led by Willa Cather expanded her research and revised the series for final publication.

Chapter 5—The Tragedy of Desire: Christian Science in Theodore Dreiser's *The "Genius"* considers the presence of Christian Science in Theodore Dreiser's semi-autobiographical novel *The "Genius."* Even though he never fully converted, Dreiser began a lifelong interest in Christian Science when he and his wife consulted a healer in New York during a crisis in their marriage after Dreiser became romantically involved with the teenage daughter of a New York socialite. I argue that like many Progressive Era Americans, Dreiser saw Christian Science as a possible solution to the problem of desire, its overwhelming power and contingency. For turn of the century Americans, desire was a problem with economic as well as moral dimensions, so I explain how the Christian Science perspective on desire—rooted in the radical denial of the body's reality—dovetailed with social justice theories with which Dreiser was in sympathy.

Because the close study of a religious movement raises questions about the author's positionality, it seems appropriate to note here that I bear no affiliation with the Church of Christ, Scientist and was largely ignorant of its history and central precepts until I began uncovering these connections between Eddy's movement and well-known voices in American literature. My goal in this dissertation is to disrupt the stability of the secularization narrative in the study of American literature by arguing that Christian Science, and religion as a whole, were relevant to the production of literature during this period. Furthermore, the impact of Christian Science on American culture was and continues to be a complex phenomenon worthy of scholarly engagement. While the church that Mrs. Eddy founded does not enjoy the same level of membership and influence that it had during the first half of the twentieth century, it behooves us to remember that Christian Science still has a presence in U.S. American culture, that the legacy that Mary Baker Eddy left when she died in 1910 still resonates today. The First

Church of Christ, Scientist and the building that houses both the Eddy archives and the Christian Science Publishing Society remain important landmarks in Boston. There are Christian Science Reading Rooms in virtually every major metropolitan area in the United States, and the *Christian Science Monitor*—though now published daily online and as a weekly magazine rather than a daily newspaper—remains one of the most reliable sources of mainstream reporting after a century in print. As I write this, Hollywood actor Val Kilmer, who was raised a Christian Scientist, is making an independent film about Mary Baker Eddy and Mark Twain (he himself is giving live performances in full Twain drag in preparation for the role) during the time when Twain was writing *Christian Science.* In an interview with Spirituality.com, a Christian Science website, Kilmer states that he hopes the film will be for him and his faith what *The Passion of the Christ* was for Mel Gibson.[7]

As Anne Harrington and Barbara Ehrenreich have shown, the central beliefs of Christian Science and related movements like New Thought have permeated American culture in other significant ways. The belief that dogged optimism and an unfailing assertion of the power of mind over matter infuses American business culture, motivational literature, and recovery and addiction therapy.[8] Mary Baker Eddy and other mental healing figures like P.P. Quimby and Warren Felt Evans are the direct intellectual ancestors of Norman Vincent Peale, author of *The Power of Positive Thinking* (1952), and Rhonda Byrne, author of *The Secret* (2006). The fact that Bill Wilson, one of the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous was also influenced by the writings of Mary Baker

[7] For some intriguing insights into Kilmer's Christian Science affiliation, see Chuck Klosterman's profile in *Esquire.*

[8] The Church of Scientology, founded in the mid-twentieth century by science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard and with which Christian Science is occasionally confused, shares some features with Christian Science and generally regards the modern medical establishment—particularly psychiatry—with suspicion.

Eddy, attests to the ways in which the central assumptions of a movement that has long been a lightning rod for controversy and condemnation have entered therapeutic vocabularies that we quite simply take for granted.

Perhaps as a result of that history of controversy, an element within the Christian Science organization, which for so long attempted to insulate itself from outside scrutiny, has begun to adopt an attitude of openness. As the *New York Times* reported in March of 2010, Christian Scientists have begun reaching out to the mainstream medical community, attempting to "redefine their methods as a supplement rather than a substitute for conventional treatment, like biofeedback, chiropractic or homeopathic care" (Vitello). The opening of the Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, which regularly hosts groups of school children and tourists, is another signal of that openness, as is the fellowship program designed to encourage outside scholars to come use the materials available in the Research Room. As I can attest to from personal experience, the holdings in this archive are considerable, and the level of access scholars are now afforded makes it a gold mine for scholars in literature, history, American Studies, and Women's Studies. It is my hope that this is just the beginning.

CHAPTER ONE—"The Falling Apple": The Rise of Christian Science and the Contest for Cultural Authority

My immediate recovery from the effects of an injury caused by an accident, an injury that neither medicine nor surgery could reach, was the falling apple that led me to the discovery how to be well myself, and how to make others so
--Mary Baker Eddy, Retrospection and Introspection

On February 3, 1866, Mary Patterson—the future Mary Baker G. Eddy[9]—fell on a patch of ice in Lynn, Massachusetts and was rendered unconscious. She was taken to the home of her friends and treated by a homeopath named Alvin M. Cushing, who considered her injury to be serious (Gill 162).[10] Despite the protests of Dr. Cushing, she insisted on being taken home, where she was treated by two neighborhood women. These caregivers despaired for their charge's life, reporting that Mrs. Patterson had broken her back. Three days after the accident, Mrs. Patterson asked for her Bible and dismissed everyone from her room. Hours later, the woman thought to be suffering from a spinal injury left her bed unaided (Gill 162).[11] This incident would eventually become the founding myth of Christian Science, the moment when, as its founder would claim in her

[9] Mary Baker G. Eddy was married three times. She married George Washington Glover in 1844. He died, probably of yellow fever, in the same year. A decade later, in 1853, she married the dentist and homeopath Daniel Patterson, but the two separated and eventually divorced in 1866 due to Mr. Patterson's affair with another married woman. She married her final husband, Asa Gilbert Eddy, one of her own students in 1877. In the tradition of Eddy's biographers, I will refer to her by the chronologically correct name when discussing specific events in her life and in the history of Christian Science. The name Mrs. Eddy, however, will be used when talking about her general ideas.

[10] This incident appeared in the *Lynn Reporter* on February 3, 1866: "Mrs. Mary M. Patterson of Swampscott fell upon the ice near the corner of Market and Oxford Sts., on Thursday evening and was severely injured. She was taken up in an insensible condition and carried to the residence of S.M. Bubier, Esq., nearby, where she was kindly cared for during the night. Dr. Cushing, who was called, found her injuries to be internal and of a very serious nature, inducing spasms and intense suffering. She was removed to her home in Swampscott yesterday in a very critical condition" (Milmine, "Various").

[11] The facts of this story have been endlessly debated by Eddy's supporters and critics, so a precise, accurate recounting of the details is almost impossible. What I have presented here is the account that Eddy herself gives in her autobiography, *Retrospection and Introspection* supplemented with certain facts (such as the names of Eddy's caregivers) from biographies by Gillian Gill and Robert Peel.

autobiography, “My immediate recovery from the effects of an injury caused by an accident, an injury that neither medicine nor surgery could reach, was the falling apple that led me to the discovery how to be well myself, and how to make others so” (*Retrospection* 24). She calls the event a “miracle,” but a miracle “in perfect scientific accord with divine law” (24), a miracle that was not a temporary suspension of the divinely ordained laws of nature but in perfect keeping with them.

She then “withdrew from society about three years,—to ponder [her] mission, to search the Scriptures, to find the Science of Mind that should take the things of God and show them to the creature, and reveal the great curative Principle,—Deity” (24-5). In this course of study, “the Bible was [her] textbook,” and through it she came to understand “Jesus’ teaching and demonstration,[12] and the Principle and rule of spiritual Science and metaphysical healing,—in a word, Christian Science” (25). Her system was called Science because its methods were supposedly true to natural laws and believed to be empirically observable and verifiable. Christ’s “demonstrations” were not supernatural events, but acts in keeping with laws of nature that humans were thus far unable to access due to sin and ignorance. She named it “Christian, because it is compassionate, helpful, and spiritual” (25). In her studies, she had discovered that the corporeal is an illusion or an “error,” “because Soul alone is truly substantial. … Spirit I called the *reality*; and matter, the *unreality*” (25). By applying the mind and bearing witness to the unreality of the body and thereby the unreality of sickness and physical suffering, that body could be healed, for “Mind reconstructed the body” (28).

This story—Mary Patterson alone with her Bible—is roughly the Christian Science equivalent of Paul on the road to Emmaus, of Mohammed on the mountain, of

---

12 “Demonstration” refers to acts of healing. Eddy calls Christ’s miracles demonstrations of divine Science, and healing acts performed by Christian Science practitioners are often called the same thing.

Joseph Smith and the Golden Plates. It is the story that supposedly contains both the fact and the proof of revelation, verifying the status of the storyteller as prophet, the epiphany as divine intervention. Critics of Christian Science have long debated the facts of this account: was she really injured? Were her injuries as severe as she claimed? Was this actually the seminal moment of discovery or did it evolve much later? True or not, this narrative reveals the obsessions of Eddy and her contemporaries, both of those who eventually believed in her and those who stood in judgment of her. It contains clues to the social, historical, and personal circumstances that combined to produce such a thing as Christian Science, that made such a thing immanently necessary at that given moment for a certain set of people. The story of the "Fall in Lynn" as a piece of Christian Science mythology is less important as a set of verifiable facts than as a key to the themes that would become most important to the appeal of Christian Science in the late nineteenth century U.S., themes that speak to the idiosyncratic ways in which Christian Science engaged with science, religion, and American culture generally. The most unique facet of the movement as both a religion and a method of healing was its attempt to balance and synthesize the vocabularies of both science and spirituality: positing this initial event as both scientific discovery and divine revelation, a miracle that demonstrated not the intervention of the supernatural in the natural world but the "fact" that such events were mundane and in keeping with natural order.[13] Furthermore, it illuminates the personal appeal that Christian Science would have for many of its early followers with its emphasis on the empowerment of the individual as an agent of his or her own health, the

[13] In that sense, it is quite distinct from other revelation narratives. As Stephen Gottschalk claims, "The healing that she associated with this revelatory breakthrough was not, however, on the order of a dramatic 'road to Damascus' experience or a turning point as clear-cut as Luther's decision, upon being struck by lightning, to become a monk" (*Rolling* 78). Rather, the revelation she experienced was one of her own unmediated access to the Truth and her own competence to put it into practice through a process of development and discovery.

accessibility of healing powers to the average person, and the importance of the individual spiritual experience unmediated by external authorities. Christian Science was a technology for healing that addressed the specific ways in which nineteenth century Americans understood the relationship between body and mind and the nature of both physical and mental illness.

Unsurprisingly, these themes emerged within a context in which both scientific medicine and the professional religious ministry were in crisis, their claims to special, elite competency challenged by populists and sectarians from all over the U.S. Furthermore, because Eddy's theories were in dialogue with other extant theories about the relationship between body and mind, she was able frame her approach as "scientific" and modern at a moment when the rhetorical power of the word "science" was very much up for grabs. This chapter will explain that particular context and its importance to an understanding of Eddy's "discovery" and the early successes of Christian Science as a medico-religious movement in the late nineteenth century. It will also examine the arguments of early critics of Christian Science in order to show that opposition to Eddy's movement was as much about staking out claims to cultural authority using science as a rhetoric as it was about determining who had the monopoly on fact in the debates among regular doctors,[14] Christian Scientists, and other irregular practitioners.

"AN INJURY THAT NEITHER MEDICINE NOR SURGERY COULD REACH"

Eddy's account of her healing—like most Christian Science healing narratives—begins with claims about the inadequacy of conventional medicine. Christian Scientists consistently defined themselves as the antidote to regular physicians and asserted that

[14]"Regular" is the term that orthodox medical practitioners used to describe themselves in the nineteenth century, though what constituted "orthodox" medicine at any given point during that period may or may not conform to modern notions of regularity.

conventional medicine was outmoded and even unscientific. Evidence of the failures of medicine tended to be anecdotal, but their personal and particular nature did not make them less real to those who sought Christian Science as an alternative. The pages of *The Christian Science Journal* are full of testimonials that begin thus:

> I was taken sick about August 1901, and was treated by a physician. … There was no immediate improvement in my condition, but gradually I grew worse. Becoming discouraged, I changed physicians. The second one announced a complication of diseases, and there was no improvement under his treatment. In October, 1901, I went to Gilroy Hot Springs. Grew worse there and returned in a critical condition, gave up my practice and continued treatment,—medicine and washing out of the stomach, with a very limited diet. The doctor finally pronounced neurasthenia of the stomach. I got no better, and December 24, 1901, a consultation was held. They were at a loss to know what to do. (24.1: 35)

> Previous to the entrance of Christian Science into my life, about fifteen years ago, I may say that I scarcely knew what it meant to be well. I was of a very active disposition, but the least effort was invariably followed by headache, extreme nervousness, and frequently by complete exhaustion. Although obliged to leave college several times on account of ill health, I finally graduated, but was in a deplorable state, both mental and physical, in spite of the fact that I had been almost continually under the care of a physician. … A complication of diseases having developed, a consultation was held, and as a last resort I was operated upon. A severe cough set in and I was getting weaker day by day. It was decided that quick consumption had developed, and that I could live but a few days longer. (24.1: 36)

> Early in April, 1905, our little boy, aged two years, was seized with high fever followed by violent spasms, from no apparent cause. A very serious nervous condition followed for four days, when a state of coma set in. The nearest Christian Science practitioner was asked to take the case, but the father, not being a Christian Scientist, insisted that *materia medica* should be well represented. One physician was in steady attendance, and four who were called in consultation pronounced the disease meningitis. They agreed that there was absolutely no hope, and that the best they could do for us was to wish that the child would lie in that state until he passed on, that all might be spared any form of violent agony before death came. They said it was impossible for him to recover and that we should be anxious for the end to come quickly, for if such a rare thing as his

> living through the illness occurred, he would necessarily be both mentally and physically deformed. (24.1: 38)

All testimonials, accounts of hopeless situations in which benighted physicians make mistaken (and oftentimes contradictory) diagnoses and administer futile, painful treatments, invariably end with the intervention of a Christian Scientist, as in the case of the dying child:

> Medical skill having failed so entirely, the father was then willing to have Christian Science. I telephoned my teacher for help. The physician continued in attendance, being deeply interested in seeing the effects of Christian Science upon the little patient. He eagerly watched the change, which he pronounced most marvelous, and frankly said no power but God's could bring it about. He watched with us as the demonstration was made that death is only a shadow and not a reality. Once, death apparently claimed the little one, but Christ, Truth, was strong to deliver, and error could not prevail. (24.1: 38)

The Christian Science narrative asserts with absolute certainty that the methods of *materia medica* were ineffective and outdated, that doctors themselves were ultimately bewildered and ineffective in the face of disease. While rhetoric involved in such denunciations was heated and inevitably tendentious, the historical record does confirm that the inadequacies of nineteenth century American medicine were both real and deeply felt across the nation. In 1866, the year of the "Fall in Lynn," scientific medicine was only beginning to attain a tiny measure of the credibility it would have a century later, and its dominance over the healthcare profession hardly seemed inevitable. To quote feminist historians Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, "Not until 1912, according to one medical estimate, did the average patient, seeking help from the average American doctor, have more than a fifty-fifty chance of benefiting from the encounter" (*Complaints* 32). A doctor named Richard C. Cabot, critiquing Christian Science on the pages of *McClure's* in 1908, would similarly confess, "It is impossible to study the evidence for and against the so-called Christian Science cures without crossing the track of many an

incapable doctor. Indeed, there can be no candid criticism of Christian Science that does not involve also an arraignment of existing medical methods" (475).

As historians of American medicine and American professionalism have explained, the period between the 1820's and 1880's saw challenges to the entire concept of professional authority that had in the past and would later grant doctors, lawyers, ministers, and other professionals respect, honor, and reverence based on education and special competency.[15] A brief look back at the situation prior to this professional "interregnum" will help place these developments in context. A careful inquiry into the evolving nature of professionalism will also illuminate the ways in which Christian Science—with its attempts to create universities, journals, licensing standards, and professional ranks—spoke to and participated in the developing culture of professionalism in the late nineteenth century.

In eighteenth century Europe, the professions were limited to and therefore derived their authority from the genteel classes, and in the U.S. leading up to and just after the Revolutionary War, professions largely followed this European model. In late-eighteenth century London, medicine, law, and the ministry were the three learned occupations considered respectable enough for gentlemen. Even within those professions, there were strata that distinguished the learned practitioner from the technician. Physicians, for example, were classically educated and had "some medical training, which he might have acquired in various and seemingly casual ways. He attended to internal diseases and prescribed drugs; yet, as a gentleman, he did not work with his

[15] The professional is one who is neither businessman or laborer, one who owns his own labor but whose allegiance is to a code of professional honor rather than the market and the generation of wealth. Professionalism is as much a measure of prestige as it is an occupation. See Bledstein and Haber.

hands" as surgeons and apothecaries did (Haber 4).[16] Social status and education level also determined one's potential rank within the clergy. Bishops were noblemen, whose "preeminence contrasted sharply with the wretchedness of the deacons, who ... in the eighteenth century had become a fixed 'clerical proletariat'" (Haber 5).

Few nobles or gentlemen immigrated to the American colonies, however, which meant that the professions there had to be filled by relatively ordinary men. But at this point, that leveling was more a matter of necessity than the deliberate assault on privilege that would instigate the nineteenth century professional crisis. Rather than lowering the status of physician, lawyer, or minister as professional titles, acquiring those distinctions raised the status of the individual who acquired them by attending one of the newly established universities. As Haber indicates, "professionalization in America was linked with the 'art of rising in life,' with upward mobility" (6). In other words, the professions, with their institutionalized associations with status and privileged knowledge, helped create the elite and ruling classes of early American society. Yet that ruling class would not exactly mirror that of Europe. American doctors never succeeded in duplicating the occupational ranks of physician, surgeon, and apothecary, just as "the attempt to set up a cohesive elite of Anglican priests and to bring a bishop to America failed" (9). The emerging professional class did, however, succeed in establishing collegial organizations in the style of the Royal College of Physicians or the Inns of Court. These organizations helped establish licensing laws "to raise standards, esteem, and, more improbably, the incomes of practitioners" (9). By 1866, those standards and the esteem they conferred would be a rather distant memory.

[16] Haber notes that the path for surgeons, who attended to injuries and "external disorders" entailed only apprenticeship rather than a liberal arts education, whereas apothecaries were simple businessmen who required no formal education.

Haber attributes the precipitous decline of the authority and gentlemanly honor associated with the professions to the broader leveling impulses of the post-revolutionary and Jacksonian periods, which "joined with the spirit of expansion to inspire a widespread attack upon various forms of exclusiveness, restriction, and monopoly" (93). Yet, Haber notes, this was an "equivocal egalitarianism" that "mixed a vague animus for leveling with a distinct eagerness for rising in the world" (93). Thus, institutional gateways into the professions and the social standing those professions could confer were collapsed, but only for white men.[17] Rather than abolishing the notion of social hierarchies, "the expansion of political democracy in this era, through suffrage extension and the new political devices that accompanied it, to all appearances made most white males, irrespective of social standing, religious belief, merit, and even virtue, members of the ruling class" (Haber 96). Any "well-behaved white male" could be a gentleman, and the traditional professions, for publicists like Francis Lieber,[18] increasingly became a model for gentlemanly behavior for the emergent middle class. This had the dual effect of rendering professional status desirable and elite while simultaneously lowering the standards for that entry into those professions.

Evangelical Protestantism was both an impetus for and a beneficiary of these leveling impulses. American evangelicalism largely eliminated Anglican Church hierarchies. While elite divinity schools such as Harvard and Yale continued to produce learned clergymen in the tradition of the highly literate and hierarchical Puritans, the Second Great Awakening saw "a style of religious leadership that the public deemed 'untutored' and 'irregular'" become "successful, even normative in the first decades of

[17] Haber does not explicitly state this, but it appears that the reification of race and gender as central categories for social exclusion was essential to the creation of this new professional class.

[18] Lieber wrote conduct guides for American men, such as the lecture series *The Character of a Gentleman,* delivered in 1846 (Haber 99).

the republic" (Hatch 5). The foundation of new Protestant sects like the Seventh Day Adventists, the Methodists, the Baptists, and the Latter Day Saints was instigated by religious visionaries who did not come out of and, in fact, defined themselves against, those elite institutions. American Protestants tended to emphasize the personal, unmediated relationship of the individual Christian with both the Biblical text and even God himself, and these individuals (William Miller, Francis Asbury, John Leland, and Joseph Smith) constructed their authority not on classical learning but on claims to direct encounters with the divine.[19] When Mary Baker Eddy claimed to have "discovered" Christian Science in a moment of intense meditation on the Scriptures, she was operating within a well-defined script for evangelical revelation and movement-building.

Just as populism and sectarian innovation had profound implications for the future of American Protestantism,[20] similar forces would shape nineteenth century medicine. First of all, increasing emphasis on technical know-how over elitist classical education led to a proliferation of training colleges—more accessible alternatives to elite universities such as Harvard and Yale—opening the medical field to nearly all white men and even some women who wished to pursue medicine as a career.[21] Women and non-

---

[19] This commitment to populism among American Protestants was hardly universal or uniform. The established clergy predictably responded to these movements with suspicion and hostility, yet those divisions followed class lines as much as they did theological ones. As Nathan Hatch states in *The Democratization of American Christianity*, the established clergy feared that "the wrong sort of people had joined Methodism—people who rejected social authority's claim to religious power" (14).

[20] For more on the impact of the Second Great Awakening on religious pluralism, see William Hutchison.

[21] Because most medical care in the eighteenth century was rendered at home, women occupied important—though non-professional and underappreciated—roles as lay practitioners and midwives. Starr suggests that "medical practice in New Jersey as late as 1818 belonged almost entirely to women" (49). The rise of obstetrics eventually made midwives and non-professional female practitioners obsolete in certain areas, particularly among the middle classes. However, the 1840's saw the first women attaining formal medical training in the U.S. and the founding of the first medical college for women, the New England Medical College.

white persons, functioning as lay healers in their own communities had long functioned as the primary dispensers of healthcare:

> The colonies also boasted a varied group of women healers who earned part or all of their incomes from medical practice. Some were urban specialists in infant care who came to aid well-to-do mothers after childbirth, and lived six to ten weeks with a particular family before moving on. Resident nurses who were frequently consulted in folk medicine before advanced illness made it necessary to procure the aid of a physician also peopled the ranks of colonial medical practitioners. Teenaged girls, too, were sent to nurse sick relatives or attend childbeds, and many acquired significant knowledge through experience. Cotton Mather, for example, believed in woman's natural affinity for healing and taught medicine to his own daughter. In addition, we know that women were employed as nurses in the American forces during the Revolution, and history has preserved the name of one woman, a Mrs. Allyn, who served as an army surgeon during King Phillip's War. (Morantz-Sanchez 12)

As Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English argue in their polemical history of women in medicine, "Women have always been healers. They were the unlicensed doctors and anatomists of western history" (*Witches* 3). The professionalization of medicine in the nineteenth century led to the gradual elimination of such lay healers, especially among the upper and middle classes, but during this professional interregnum, women's roles as nurturers and caregivers began providing a rationale for their (extremely limited) entry into that profession.

Accompanying that expansion of opportunity was a relaxation of standards. In the 1820s, individual states were already beginning to abolish medical licensing laws, and such rollbacks escalated through the 1850s. Yet, as Paul Starr points out, the reasons for the near wholesale elimination of licensure were complex and the affects paradoxical. Attacks on medical licensure actually began as a way of *ensuring* competence, as popular opinion held that a medical license was "an expression of favor," the means by which

medical societies maintained their unearned place of privilege (Starr 58).[22] As Starr argues, a medical license was only meaningful "if it was accepted as evidence of objective skill. But the belief that medical societies and boards of censors were merely closed corporations, like the banks and monopolies, utterly subverted their value as agencies of legitimation" (58). Abolishing licensure was a means of forcing traditional medical practitioners to compete on the market with other approaches, reaffirming the belief that rational knowledge ought to be accessible to the layman, free from "all the traditional forms of mystification that medicine and other professions had relied upon" (58). This shift in attitudes was, in fact, a crucial turning point that would enable mid and late nineteenth century doctors and researchers to challenge "outdated bases of legitimacy" and build a profession based on modern science, which Starr argues "shares with the democratic temper an antagonism to all that is obscure, vague, occult, and inaccessible" (59). However, that same populist shift would also hamper those very scientific developments, which, in their constantly compounding specificity gave "rise to complexity and specialization, which then remove knowledge from the reach of lay understanding" (59). The mid-nineteenth century, that tumultuous half-century period between the decline of eighteenth century professional medicine and the rise of modern medicine saw that profession first reach its nadir in terms of both authority *and* competence. As Foucault claims in *Birth of the Clinic,* "[A]n entirely free field of medical experiment had to be constituted, so that the natural needs of the species might emerge unblurred and without trace; it also had to be sufficiently present in its totality

[22] S. Weir Mitchell mocks the standards of this period in "Autobiography of a Quack" by having his protagonist present this portrait of medical school: "Dissecting struck me as a rather nasty business for a gentleman, and on this account I did just as little as was absolutely essential. In fact, if a man took his tickets and paid the dissection fees, nobody troubled himself as to whether or not he did any more than this. A like evil existed at the graduation: whether you squeezed through or passed with credit was a thing with was not made public, so I had absolutely nothing to stimulate my ambition. I am told that it is all very different today" (14),

and concentrated in its content to allow the formation of an accurate, exhaustive, permanent corpus of knowledge about the health of a population" (38).

During this period, traditional doctors found themselves competing with various medical sects, and the religious implication of the term "sectarianism," is not an accident. Starr argues that medical pluralism bore a great resemblance both in inspiration and practice to religious sects: "A sect, religious or professional, is a dissident group that sets itself apart from an established institution—a church or a profession; its members often see themselves as neglected and scorned apostles of truth" (95). These "apostles of truth" included adherents of Thomsonian medicine, homeopathy, hydropathy, osteopathy, mesmerism, mind cure, eclecticism, herbal medicine, and various permutations and hybridizations of them all. Starr also reveals that it was hardly unusual for religious sects to adopt a particular form of medical practice that suited their theology and way of life: "The Mormons favored Thomsonian medicine and the Millerites hydropathy. The Swedenborgians were inclined toward homeopathic medicine" (95). The reason for such affinity between religion and medicine is that the care of the body and the care of the soul were linked enterprises for many (though not all) Americans in the nineteenth century, especially those who dissented from the dominant paradigms of religious and medical practice. While the "pastor-physician" of the eighteenth century—professionals with both theological degrees and medical credentials, who attended to both the physical and spiritual needs of the community[23]—is largely gone today, "in America, various religious sects still make active efforts to cure the sick, while the dominant churches are more or less reconciled to the claims of the medical profession and have abandoned healing as a part of pastoral care" (95).

[23] Starr reveals that "the first president of the College of New Jersey was both a physician and minister. In the society's first ten years, six of its thirty-six members were 'pastor-physicians'" (Starr 40).

These various sects established their credibility in contrast to a medical profession that had not only been stripped of its long-held signifiers of authority but had become conspicuously incoherent and ineffective. Charles Rosenberg's *The Cholera Years* provides a vivid portrait of the state of the medical profession in the mid-nineteenth century through the lens of the three major cholera epidemics of 1832, 1849, and 1866. During that final epidemic, which occurred the same year that Eddy discovered Christian Science, "the American medical profession was in transition. … the critical temper productive of the scientific advances that have so transformed the status of the American physician in the twentieth century served in 1866 merely to underline the professions real, if transitory, inadequacies" (244). In order to understand why Christian Science (in addition to many other alternative healing methods) presented a viable and even preferable alternative to traditional medicine, we must understand what standard of care Eddy's contemporaries were accustomed to under that regime.

Rosenberg's portrait of the 1849 cholera epidemic is rather chilling. "Never before had the status of the American medical profession been as low," he states, and "the most obvious cause of this deterioration in its standing was the imperfections of the medical profession itself" (154). He shows what this meant for the average patient at mid-century. "More damaging to the medical profession," he says, "than either lack of education or of ethical standards was the practice of the average physician. His ministrations provided neither cure nor the illusion of competence and consistency" (156). The so-called "heroic" treatments for cholera were diverse and brutal. High doses of calomel (mercury chloride) were administered with intent to induce mercury poisoning: "a common rule of thumb warned that the drug had not begun to take effect until the patient's gums bled" (157). Other common treatments included bloodletting, tobacco smoke enemas, and high doses of laudanum. Needless to say, these treatments

were as ineffective as they were unpleasant: "The lack of dignity and of education, even its harsh remedies, could have been forgiven the medical profession had it produced results. But its failures were too conspicuous" (157). Even physicians themselves were aware of the serious inadequacies in the vast majority of medical practices. According to Haber, "A leading physician of the Massachusetts Medical Society announced that 'the amount of death and disaster in the world would be less, if all disease were left to itself'" (106). Therefore, as Starr acknowledges, even if the logic of abolishing licensure and professional standards in the early nineteenth century seems, at times, perverse, resistance to the medical treatment provided by the average nineteenth century doctor can be seen as an entirely sane reaction: "Popular resistance to professional medicine has sometimes been portrayed as hostility to science and modernity. But given what we now know about the objective ineffectiveness of early nineteenth-century therapeutics, popular skepticism was hardly unreasonable" (56).

Any discussion of the deficient quality of nineteenth century healthcare must acknowledge disparities in access. As Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English have indicated, the middle and upper middle classes were the primary consumers of healthcare, while the poor were largely shut out: "Doctors, who zealously indulged the ills of the wealthy patients, had no time to spare for the poor. … By and large, medical care for the poor meant home remedies or patent medicines" (*Complaints* 48). The living and working conditions of the poor made them most susceptible to disease and injury, and taking time off to recover often meant loss of job. Theodore Dreiser's novels portray this situation vividly. The titular heroine of *Sister Carrie* loses her job at a shoe factory after a bout of illness, and Father Gerhardt of *Jennie Gerhardt* loses his job at a glass factory after his hands are burned (to the point that his fingers have to be amputated) in an accident. Rosenberg's account of the cholera epidemics focuses on the Five Points ghetto

in New York City. During these epidemics, those who could afford to fled the city, while the poor were left in squalid tenements. During the 1832 epidemic, "William A. Caruthers, a young physician and novelist-to-be, helping to treat the poor in the Five Points was shocked at the misery he saw—far worse, he later wrote, than that to be found among the most ill-used of slaves in his native South. The inhabitants of the Five Points seemed to the young physician no longer human" (34). Conditions were no better in 1849 and 1866. The relationship between cholera and poverty was so obvious that the poor were blamed for the problem, either on account of their immorality, uncleanness, or hereditary faults. The logic of social Darwinism supported the belief that the inferior poor were both the source of disease and its rightful victims: "Poverty was its own cure; epidemic diseases among the poor were the ultimately benign instrument of natural selection" (Ehrenreich, *Complaints* 54). Thus medical care in the nineteenth century was not only inadequate but often unavailable to those most in need of it, and even public hospitals, established for the care of the poor, were regarded as little more than charnel houses due to their horrifying sanitary conditions and high mortality rates.

"I GAINED THE SCIENTIFIC CERTAINTY THAT ALL CAUSATION WAS MIND"

In this context, Mary Patterson, the future Mary Baker Eddy, having struggled with ill health the majority of her life and possessing rather limited means as a lower middle class woman, turned to the former mesmerist Dr. Phineas Parkhurst Quimby for help long before she founded the medico-religious movement inspired by many of his ideas. Eddy suffered throughout her life from neurasthenic complaints. As a very young woman, Mary Baker became both a mother and a widow and subsequently suffered such

ill health that her child had to be placed in the care of another family.[24] Conventional medicine failed to alleviate her condition, so "she experimented with various patent medicines and alternative medicines of the day, but to little avail" (Harrington 112). This condition persisted throughout her second marriage to the homeopath Daniel Patterson until she sought the treatment of P.P. Quimby in 1862. Quimby's mind cure methodology and the healing practices that Eddy would eventually take from it were rooted in the nineteenth century preoccupation with the power of the mind over the body. Quimby and Eddy were part of a line of healers and innovators roughly beginning with Mesmer who unfailingly insisted that they were engaging in science. Though it is often said by critics of Christian Science that it is neither Christianity nor Science, the intellectual tradition that Eddy was operating in gave her ample reason to rhetorically position her methods as scientific, because she insisted that they were experimentally testable.

Christian Science, with its disavowal of the body and its construction of Mind as ultimate Reality fits neatly within an ideological framework in which, as historian of the field of psychology Philip Cushman notes:

> The mind was becoming a thing in its own right, in contact with but separate from the body. This modern mind was not so much a battleground in which God and the devil contended; instead it was an entire realm that was governed by the natural laws of science and logic, and it was superior to the body and other aspects of the world of matter. Slowly, the mind began to show up as the most important quality of the human being. It was through the mind that logic and science were exercised, and thus through the mind that the world of matter was dominated and controlled. Because domination and control were the order

[24] Mary Baker Eddy and her son were reunited after the establishment of her church, when the latter was a full-grown adult, but the two never had a close relationship. Critics of Eddy would use the supposed "abandonment" of her son and her chilly adult relationship with him in order to paint her as an indifferent mother, but Gillian Gill's biography of Eddy has revealed that the circumstances were far more complicated, that the young Mary Glover (her first married name) struggled to care for her son as an invalid and relinquished him unwillingly and under intense pressure from the family members with whom she was living.

> of the day in the emerging capitalist economy, the mind, as the instrument of domination, was becoming the e*ssential* quality of the self. It was to become the most studied, focused upon, worried over, experimented with, and revered subject of the modern era. Those who were thought to understand it, and were responsible for healing it, became increasingly powerful. (93)

In a counter-intuitive move, Anne Harrington, in her history of mind-body medicine traces the roots of nineteenth century mesmerism, mind cure, Christian Science, psychotherapy, and ultimately the twentieth century philosophy of "positive thinking" to possession and exorcism in an account of the confrontation between German exorcist Father Johann Joseph Gassner and Viennese physician Anton Mesmer. In the wake of Reformation-era challenges to Catholic authority and practice, skeptics began to question the previously unassailable demonstrations of spiritual healing as practiced by European priests. This skepticism regarding counterfeit claims of possession and exorcism gave rise to a narrative about the "power of suggestion," a paradigm in which the signs of the body could no longer be taken at face value, and the symptoms of demonic activity began to be attributed to the influence of human promptings. Though remembered for their dubious claims and theatrical demonstrations, these early forerunners of modern psychology saw themselves as replacing the mystical regime of religion with rational, scientific explanations for human distress.

Eighteenth century exorcism was part religious ritual and part spectacle, a space in which the body exhibited the necessary signs that proved both its disordered state (demonic possession) and its ultimate relief. Gassner could produce a variety of symptoms in his patients, including convulsions and the raising and lowering of heart rates on command, and Mesmer's contribution to the debunking effort was in his ability to produce these same symptoms through wholly unspiritual means. Mesmer, who exists in the modern memory as "a charlatan, or a showman, or maybe as someone who discovered the existence of psychological processes that he did not himself properly

understand," styled himself as the consummate scientist in the tradition of Isaac Newton (Harrington 41). Particularly intrigued by Newton's theories of gravitation, Mesmer experimented with moving magnets across the body of his patients, who "reported experiencing strong sensations of energy moving through their bodies" and exhibited similar symptoms to those exhibited during an exorcism, including "violent convulsion" (Harrington 42). Yet these same patients always reported feeling much better after such treatment. Mesmer later discovered that he could produce the same affects merely by moving his hands over a patient's body, manipulating these invisible energies without the aid of the magnets. This force would later be infamously known as animal magnetism.

Despite its scientific pretentions and its role in challenging the presence of demonic influence in physical disorders, mesmerism retained the distinct flavor of the occult. Mesmerism combined a theory of the mind as scientifically knowable and therefore subject to self-discipline with a popular conception of the mind as a repository of mysterious, even spiritual, forces. Cushman describes Anton Mesmer thus:

> He developed a cure for the rich, bored, alienated, and troubled that seemed to be equal parts medicine, spiritualism, and hypnotism. He assembled his afflicted patients around a tub of water in which electrical wires and magnets had been inserted. As the patients held the wires, Mesmer danced around the tub, dressed in a lilac robe and armed with a special wand. He would sing, chant, and talk to his patients, and at a propitious moment touch them with the wand. Immediately they would fall into a deep curative trance, during which they might attain ecstatic spiritual heights, gain the gift of clairvoyance, or experience a deep sense of well-being, and it was said, be relieved of their troublesome, usually psychosomatic, symptoms. Mesmer proclaimed, 'There is only one illness and one cure.' The one, universal illness was the lack of connection to the great electrical-mystical ground of being. An invisible spiritual fluid that was alive in the world connected all living beings with a force greater and more sublime than anything one could imagine. (Cushman 118)

Critics and later adaptors of mesmerism found much that was tawdry and suspect in this sensational approach to healing. On the European continent, attempts to

domesticate Mesmer's wild approach are epitomized in the work of the French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot, infamous for his work with female hysterics.[25] Mesmer's methods were adapted and transported from Europe to the U.S. by Charles Poyen, the future teacher of Mary Baker's mentor, Phineas Parkhurst Quimby. The American approach to mind-body medicine, in keeping with the spirit of the Jacksonian period, would be more individualistic, de-emphasizing the role of charismatic healers like Mesmer and Charcot. Though the student of a mesmerist himself, Quimby was deeply skeptical toward his intellectual forbears, as was his student, Mary, for whom Malicious Animal Magnetism—which she described as a form of mind control—would represent the closest thing to demonic forces in Christian Science theology. Quimby's contribution to the evolving field of mind cure was to "relocate the primary cause of emotional distress: mesmerism's theoretical emphasis on unbalanced magnetic fluids was replaced with an emphasis on outmoded or incorrect (negative) ideas about life" (Cushman 124). Thus, Quimby's methods were more measured, less showman-like and less authoritarian than those of Mesmer and Charcot. Cushman claims that Quimby launched mesmerism from a system of mere symptom relief to a broader philosophy of life and wellness that emphasized positive thinking over the production of altered mental states. Adherents of

[25] Charcot attempted to locate the mechanism for hypnotic and mesmeric states in the physiology of the brain itself, and in doing so became convinced that such states "could *only* be produced in patients suffering from hysteria. It consisted of discrete phases—catalepsy, lethargy, and somnambulism—each of which could be identified by special physiological signs and provoked by stimulating the nervous system in specific differentiable ways" (Harrington 55). Rather than a healing method, susceptibility to these states became a sign of (usually distinctly female) pathology. As Harrington argues, "Charcot had succeeded in doing two things: giving an aura of respectability to the subject [of hypnosis]; and staking a clear claim to the medical profession's exclusive competency to deal with it" (55). Charcot became famous for his photographs of hysterical patients, taken in the midst of his efforts to develop an anatomy of hysteria and analyzed to great effect by feminist literary critic Evelyn Ender. He also became famous for his own (unsettlingly familiar) brand of showmanship, public displays of symptomatic female patients performed for groups of physicians, medical students, and even members of the general public. However, he consistently denied the influence of doctor-patient rapport in this work: "As he saw it, his exhibitions were not interpersonal dramas, but demonstrations of a tool capable of revealing certain laws of physiology under pathological conditions" (Harrington 57).

mind cure "learned to control the material conditions of their lives through the thoughts and wishes of their conscious mind" (125). Quimby's method, in fact, looks something like a reversal of the talking cure. A circular which reached Mary Patterson in New Hampshire and probably written in 1860 reads thus:

> He [Quimby] gives no medicine and makes no outward applications, but simply sits down by the patients, tells them their feelings and what they think is their disease. If the patients admit that he tells them their feelings, &c, he changes the fluids and the system and establishes the truth, or health. The Truth is the Cure. (Qtd. in Gill 129)

The key to health, in this system, was realizing the error of one's belief in illness or injury, and the healer is there to guide that realization.

These methods were profoundly successful in the case of the ailing Mary Patterson, allowing her to go about rituals of daily life that had previously been impossible. Mrs. Patterson was in the midst of trying a variety of therapeutic solutions for her constant fatigue and pain, including homeopathy and water cure, when she learned of Dr. Quimby through a visitor who claimed to have been healed by him. Desperate for a solution, she wrote to Quimby and declared her determination to "use her last strength" to reach his office in Portland (Gill 127). The change was almost immediate. She notes in a letter to the Portland *Evening Courier* on November 7, 1862 her newfound ability to climb the 182 steps to Portland City Hall as evidence of her almost immediate transformation. It was, in fact, Mrs. Patterson who initially spoke of Quimby and his methods in spiritual terms:

> At present I am too much in error to elucidate the truth, and can touch only the key note for the master hand to wake the harmony. May it be in essays, instead of notes, say I. After all, this is a very spiritual doctrine—But the eternal years of God are with it and it must stand first as the rock of ages. And to many a poor sufferer may it be found as by me, "the shadow of a great Rock in a weary land" (Qtd. in Gill 131).

Her penchant for equating Quimby with Christ was not well received. Though Quimby had sometimes described his philosophy as "Christian" because of its salutary effects on the individual and society, he generally refrained from spiritualizing any part of his method or claiming any religious role for himself. Raised in Congregationalist New England, Eddy had a history of making outlandish, even heretical spiritual claims. In her autobiography, she tells a story that could have been cribbed from the Book of Samuel: "For some twelve months, when I was about eight years old, I repeatedly heard a voice, calling me distinctly by name, three times, in an ascending scale" (*Retrospection* 8). She claimed that others heard the voice, which was assumed to be her mother's, though her mother never called her. Finally, her mother showed her the account of the young prophet Samuel "and bade me, when the voice called again, to reply as he did, 'Speak Lord; for Thy servant heareth'" (*Retrospection* 9). Such pronouncements would inspire skepticism and ire to be sure, but they indicate, as Gillian Gill argues, that "already in November 1862, [Mary Patterson] was focusing on the triangular relationship among patient, healer, and God as the key to cure, and this idea was not something she learned from Quimby but, if anything, something which she brought to him" (132).

Her initial cure was not permanent, however, and Eddy continued to correspond with Quimby from her home. Quimby, in turn, continued to heal her via "absent treatment," or treatment at a distance, which was an accepted practice among mind curists: "Quimby firmly believed that he had clairvoyant powers and he could help others to recover their health, whether he was in the same room with them or separated by many miles" (Gill 134). This was a belief that many only tangentially connected to Quimby's circle took for granted, and Mark Twain would espouse his own theory of mental influence at a distance in article called "Mental Telegraphy." Absent treatment would become a hallmark of Christian Science methodology from its inception, a boon to those

who—due to geography or disability—could not travel to see a practitioner. We can see then, that the aspects of Quimbyism that influenced Mary Patterson were both spiritual and relational, emphasizing personal bonds between healer and patient, bonds that could be of comfort regardless of physical proximity.[26] Though it is clear that she relied on him extensively during this period, his mental and spiritual support during periods of separation appears to have given her the strength to carry on by herself. She began pondering what she had learned from Quimby and committing her thoughts to writing, in fulfillment of long-held literary ambitions.[27] As a result of her newly restored health, she became heavily involved in the temperance movement and other forms of social activism, all even before she founded her own religio-medical sect.

This hybridization of religious and scientific vocabularies is most clear in the way Eddy instructed her students to conduct their healing practice. At the heart of Christian Science is the "demonstration," the act of healing. Even the word "demonstration" was used to suggest that Christian Science was scientific because it produced empirically observable results. The process of healing oneself or another is a process of persuasion, of countering the evidence of illness or injury with the "Truth" of Science:

> When the first symptoms of disease appear, dispute the testimony of the material senses with divine Science. Let your higher sense of justice destroy the false process of mortal opinions which you name law, and then you will not be confined to a sick-room. … Suffer no claim of sin or of sickness to grow upon the thought. Dismiss it with an abiding conviction that it is illegitimate, because you know that God is no more the author of sickness than He is of sin. You have no law of His to support the necessity either of sin or sickness, but you have divine authority for denying that necessity and healing the sick. (Eddy, *Science and Health* 390)

[26] As Gill indicates, letters between Quimby and Mary Patterson indicate that they were very close, and "it is a tribute to Quimby that he was a man to whom a woman could address such frank letters" (Gill 149).

[27] Eddy's autobiography is filled with poems that she composed as a child and as a young woman. She was a constant writer of letters to the editor during the period of her treatment by Quimby and a prolific authoress of both poetry and prose after 1866.

This argument takes place in the mind of both the patient and the healer, though it is the healer's responsibility to enable the patient to cease believing in their own affliction: "The sick unconsciously argue for [the reality of] suffering, instead of against it. They admit its reality, whereas they should deny it. They should plead in opposition to the testimony of the deceitful senses" (*Science and Health* 394-5).

In the 1910 edition of *Science and Health*, Eddy provides an "illustration" of how this works in practice—a hybrid of the kind of miraculous healing performed by Christ in the Gospels (the prototypes for Christian Science healing) and modern talk therapy. The healer begins by reassuring the patient "as to their exemption from disease and danger" (411). The healer then contemplates the supremacy of Truth over suffering, "plead[ing] the case" in their minds and then challenging the patient's belief in the material: "Argue at first mentally, not audibly, that the patient has no disease and conform the argument so as to destroy the evidence of disease. Mentally insist that harmony is the fact, and that sickness is a temporal dream" (412). In Christian Science, the mental state of the healer (or of a parent, in the case of an infant patient) has the power to affect the mental state of the patient, imparting Truth through a kind of osmosis. Only once the patient is ready should the healer begin to impart Christian Science: "To fix truth steadfastly in your patients' thoughts, explain Christian Science to them, but not too soon,—not until your patients are prepared for the explanation,—lest you array the sick against their own interests by troubling and perplexing their thought" (414). Once the patient is prepared, the healer can begin to explain the relationship between Mind and body and empower them to conquer their own beliefs in sickness and suffering. "Instruct the sick that they are not helpless victims, for if they will only accept Truth, they can resist disease and ward it off, as positively as they can the temptation to sin" (420).

There are several remarkable features of Christian Science healing acts that might have made them both distinctive and appealing in nineteenth century culture, but the foremost contribution of Eddy's system was the merging of scientific and religious language. Unlike most other religious healers (such as the faith healers that emerged out of the late nineteenth century Pietist), Eddy did not believe that she was performing miracles or that God was performing miracles through her. In fact, she did not believe that Christ was performing miracles either when he healed the sick or raised the dead (including himself). Rather, these were acts perfectly in keeping with a natural order—a Science—that humans, in their stubborn materialism, failed to comprehend and were therefore unable to apply. According to historian Stephen Gottschalk, "the science she believed she had discovered was more than a method for replicating Jesus' healings. It was an all-embracing reconception of the nature of being. The healing works of Jesus she saw as more than enlightened acts that freed human beings from the slavery of false opinions that bound them to disease" (*Rolling* 72). Thus, Christian Science is, in a peculiar way, rigorously rational. Eddy was highly suspicious of supernatural activity because she refused to accept a division between the physical and metaphysical realms.[28] She simply asserted that the Spirit was real where the Body was not. If one accepts that Christian Science is describing the natural, provable laws of a spiritual world, its idiosyncratic deployment of the term "Science" makes a certain amount of sense.

Yet the methods of this new, radical Science were clearly modeled on orthodox science. Christian Scientists experimented. They debated their healing methodologies based on the best evidence available and adapted to changes in their knowledge-base. Despite the similarities between her narrative and the origin myths of other faiths, the fact

[28] Among the competing groups she castigates in *Science and Health*, the spiritualists get perhaps the most thorough flogging, though rumors of Eddy's own involvement with spiritualists circulated widely during her time.

that Mrs. Eddy referred to the healing in Lynn as her "discovery" of Christian Science rather than an immediate revelation—Newton's apple rather than Joseph Smith's angel Moroni—speaks volumes. Indeed, as Gottschalk argues, it was her insistence upon the observability and repeatability of the very phenomenon she experienced in Lynn that makes her system unique: "Minus her consistent and radical assertion of the demonstrability of the unreality of evil in the light of the absolute reality of God, Christian Science might well be accounted a derivative or variant of some other system of thought" (*Rolling* 76). Furthermore, Eddy's development of Christian Science theology and method followed a trajectory more like the gradual discovery and testing of a new theory than an immediate revelation direct from the mind of God. Even though the healing event in Lynn was treated as a pivotal moment, study, experiment, and revision both preceded and succeeded it.

"I ... HOLD TO LOVING OUR ENEMIES"

During the 1880s, the professional interregnum gradually came to a close, and the formation of licensing laws, professional societies, and stricter medical school requirements began to correct the excesses of mid-century anti-intellectualism and establish the foundations of modern scientific medicine. This meant that medical sectarianism began to disappear, either through co-optation (as with homeopathy) or obsolescence (hydropathy, Thomsonianism). Furthermore, opportunities for women in the professional realms of healthcare were beginning to contract. Yet the period between 1880 and 1910 was the most productive period of Eddy's life, during which she went from poverty and insignificance to wealth and glory and ultimately infamy. Membership in the Church of Christ, Scientist exploded during a period that also saw the rationalization, standardization, and professionalization of the medical field that we know

today. As such, it was practically inevitable that the fledgling Church made numerous enemies during this flowering period. Yet the opposition to Mrs. Eddy and her movement was hardly monolithic and often did not take the form that one might expect. The story of Christian Science's success and embattlement is not one in which medical science simply proved Eddy's claims inaccurate and a band of deluded followers clung fanatically and irrationally to their beliefs. It is instead a story in which parties with differing social, financial, and ideological interests would also deploy the vocabularies of science and religion to stake out claims to cultural authority. Though Eddy's critics would usually base their opposition on claims about fact and reason, it is important to remember, as Paul Starr says, that, "reason is no abstract force pushing inexorably toward greater freedom at the end of history. Its forms and uses are determined by the narrower purposes of men and women; their interests and ideals shape even what counts as knowledge" (3).

Regular Medical Practitioners

Samuel Haber identifies two socio-cultural trends at work in the restoration of the professions—particularly medicine—to a place of authority and honor starting in the 1880s. First, the rapid pace of scientific discovery and the specialization of knowledge allowed professionals to once again make claims about special competence derived from formal education and scientific inquiry:

> [P]rofessionals argued that the disciplines upon which their work was based were becoming increasingly scientific and that scientific understanding could be best inculcated through formal education. Academic training, it was generally believed, brought dignity and social standing. … The professionals undoubtedly looked to the increased educational requirements to enhance their honor and generally increase their income as well. Nonetheless it seemed obvious that the better educated the practitioner the more likely that he would be competent, and therefore society also benefitted. This last point was requisite to the

> wholeheartedness with which the professionals pressed their argument. (Haber 201)

Doctors, thanks to advances in physiology, germ theory, surgery, anesthesiology, hospital organization, and public health, "could lead in the reassertion of professional claims to authority and honor on a new basis and with the new social supports that the American society of that era provided" (Haber 202). Thus, the restoration of the AMA, the push for federal licensing laws, and the effort to eliminate sectarian movements were motivated in part by an effort to restore quality, competence, and scientific rigor to the practice of medicine. Yet that motivation was accompanied by a desire to restore to professionals the status of gentleman and all of the social and economic privileges that standing entailed. Thus, the end of the professional interregnum was also embedded in a fierce backlash against the "dogma of equality" following the failure of Reconstruction (Haber 197). The social taboos that prevented professions from establishing gate-keeping standards collapsed, as the "redemption" of the South reinvigorated cultural investment in the notion that inequality was simply the fore-ordained social order, making equality more threatening than elitism. As Haber notes, the voting rolls expanded considerably thanks to population growth, but "a greater proportion of Blacks and aliens were deprived of the right to vote in each succeeding election" (197). The public demanded tighter restrictions on immigration, and the burgeoning wealth of the industrializing Republic was concentrated in the hands of a select few. Thus, the professional standards that emerged out of this period were as much about dictating who a medical practitioner could be as it was about what a doctor ought to know and how he ought to practice, and those same doctors frequently appealed to principles that bore the mark of science—such as the supposed biological inferiority of women and non-whites—in determining who was acceptable and who was not. They were created with the partial intention of transforming professionals into a new elite class, distinct both from businessmen and those who

worked with their hands. Naturally, this meant closing the gaps that had allowed non-white males and women to enter the profession during the interregnum: **"**[I]t is not surprising that among the first to suffer the effects of the doctor's appetite for esteem and self-respect were those who, in the general judgment of society, were rarely granted honor or authority—women and Blacks" (Haber 332).

Key to the formation of the doctor as a specially endowed member of a new elite scientific class was the creation of the scientific disciplines as wholly secular enterprises. As Peter Harrison claims in the 2010 volume of essays *Science and Religion*,

> The transformation of natural history into scientific 'biology' was a vital part of this process. Whereas natural history had traditionally been dominated by the clergy, the new scientific disciplines of biology and geology gradually achieved independence from clerical influence while at the same time legitimizing a new set of non-ecclesiastical authorities. This was in fact the explicit mission of such figures as Thomas Huxley and his colleagues in the 'X-Club', who sought with an evangelical fervor to establish a scientific status for natural history, to rid the discipline of women, amateurs, and parsons and to place a secular science into the center of cultural life. (Dixon 27)

Members of the new scientific class would rhetorically position themselves as a bastion of reason against obscurantism. As A.S. Coe, writing in an 1889 issue of the *New York Medical Journal* in an article that would blast Christian Science and other forms of irregular medicine as a humbug argues:

> There are many reasons why medical science is behind all other sciences in its development and practical application to the wants of the people. Since Hippocrates, the founder of rational medicine, no real advancement was made until within the last century. The chief reason is that it has been subordinated to vague speculations of philosophers and metaphysicians and the mysticisms of the priesthood, although long before the last century a solid foundation was being laid by the study for anatomy, physiology, histology, chemistry, and therapeutics, but no application of the knowledge thus obtained to the cure of diseases could be made until the teachings of medical science had become emancipated from the traditions of the past, and freed from their dogmatic spirit by rejecting all hypothesis

> and returning to the unbiased study of natural processes as shown in health and disease. (406)

As Harrison reminds us, these claims about the special nature of science were far from disinterested or objective: "It served the political purposes of this clique to deploy a rhetoric of conflict between theology and science" (Dixon 27).[29]

Physicians saw themselves as foot soldiers in a battle, not only against alleged frauds like Mary Baker Eddy, but also against the credulity of the masses. Previously the anti-elitist spirit of the Jacksonian era had mandated therapeutic choice based on the (perhaps naïve) notion that theories had to compete with one another in an open market of ideas and treatments, but in the 1880s and 90s, doctors would call for the regulation of healthcare delivery on the grounds that the public was incapable of making rational choices about treatment. Calling upon his profession to champion the legal curtailment of the activities of sectarian practitioners, H.G.W. in *The Long Island Medical Journal* would rail against the "fresh exemptions permitted [by the New York state legislature] for unqualified half-educated parasites who want the profits of healing without its responsibilities" (491). Later he proclaims that, "The issue is a vital one, for upon it depends the question of future trespasses upon the rights of physicians of all manner of fakirs" (491). The paternalism that informed such concerns about the ability of the uneducated public to select an unscientific approach to their medical problem or even, heaven forbid, deign to *practice* a form of healing without the proper scientific training was undoubtedly connected to the concern, supported by nineteenth century eugenics, that the unwashed, ignorant masses were themselves generative of disease. As Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English have so succinctly stated, according to nineteenth century ideology about class and illness, "upper and middle-class women were 'sick'; working

[29] As he goes on to argue, the notion that this conflict between science and religion was somehow historically transcendent was more an artifact of rhetoric than an accurate description of the truth.

class women were 'sickening'" (*Complaints* 14). The same previously cited issue of *The Long Island Medical Journal* contains an article in support of state-sanctioned birth control, using the example of a man who continued to father children despite being afflicted with tuberculosis:

> Surely it seems wrong that a man afflicted with tuberculosis and of such a social development as to fail to recognize the wrong that he inflicts upon his wife and children by begetting fresh victims for a tuberculous environment and who lacks the mental development to exercise self control for their sake, should be allowed to go on in ignorance. Surely no more clear cut example can be asked for by the advocates of public instruction in birth control. It is a sin for such a man to be endued with a father's privileges; it is a sin against the community to bring forth sickly children to become charges upon public charity; it is a sin against womanhood to degrade a mother as this woman was degraded. (488)[30]

Therapeutic (and reproductive) choice was a menace because it might allow the poor and uneducated to endanger the public and become a burden on society.[31]

Doctors frequently expressed the concern that the democratic process and the American judicial system were inadequate to regulate the practice of medicine in the way it needed to be regulated. The softness of legislators was frequently blamed for the exceptions granted to Christian Scientists under their right to freely practice their religion. Likewise, juries and even judges were blamed for failures to successfully prosecute Christian Scientists who saw patients die under their care. As one editorial writer for *The Buffalo Medical Journal* writes, commenting on the trial of Harold Frederic's mistress:

---

[30] I probably need not point out that tuberculosis and susceptibility to it are not hereditary, as the excerpt seems to imply. The reference to "tuberculous environment" appears not to be a reference to the specific pathogen that causes the disease but rather a terminology borrowed from the pre-germ theory days in which noxious "miasmas" and sickly environments broadly conceived were thought to be the cause of illness.

[31] For more on class and the rhetoric of public health, see Leavitt and Wald.

> The sympathy of a jury and the weakness of the bench often combine to render adequate punishment a rare sequel. In Kentucky the practice of medicine has been well defined to be any ministration that pretends to offer to cure bodily ills to pay. But, too often, either the court itself or some of the jurors fancy they have been benefited by christian science [sic], hence convictions are not easy. Even lawyers of reputation for intelligence on ordinary subjects become believers in this weak combination of medicine and religion, and are willing advocates of the "oppressed" defendant. (378)

The intervention of external legal bodies in medical matters was apparently both desired and feared. Though physicians frequently appealed to legislative and judicial bodies to determine who could and could not practice, this theme of despair over the qualifications of those bodies to perform that duty appears frequently. Doctors often expressed a lack of confidence in the abilities of legislators, judges, and juries to make the correct decisions (and the correct decisions were always those that favored the physicians) given their lack of scientific training. As Edwin Mack in a 1903 issue of *The Wisconsin Medical Journal* laments, the doctor has much to fear from the "tribunal" that tries malpractice cases:

> [F]or the question of the propriety of a physician's conduct must in case of suit be determined by a jury. The members of the jury are necessarily not only not learned in medicine, but usually uneducated and untrained men, whose judgment on matters involving technical questions can seldom be based on any intelligent analysis of the circumstances. (199)

For that reason, he argues, verdicts must be based upon the testimony of "competent expert evidence. … A physician can be adjudged negligent or unskillful only on the testimony of physicians as experts, that the practice adopted was not such as physicians and surgeons, or ordinary knowledge and skill would have followed" (199).

The regulation of the modern medical profession had implications beyond the curtailment of sectarian activities. As Ehrenreich and English demonstrate, in some cases, it produced temporary results that were inimical to the cause of public health. The eradication of midwifery, for example, was a particularly regrettable event. In the first

decade of the twentieth century, half of all babies were still delivered by midwives. As outsiders in a medical paradigm that now demanded university education and specialized forms of training and as the primary form of competition for obstetrics as an emerging specialty, these members of a longstanding tradition were pushed out in the name of science. They were "ridiculed as 'hopelessly dirty, ignorant and incompetent'" and blamed for infections. Ehrenreich and English argue that the techniques for preventing infection were "well within the grasp of the least literate midwife … So the obvious solution for a truly public-spirited obstetrical profession would have been to make the appropriate preventive techniques known and available to the mass of midwives. This was in fact what happened in England, Germany, and most other European nations" (*Witches* 34). In the U.S., childbirth was brought into the hospital, and poor women were used as test cases in teaching hospitals.[32] The result, ironically, was a decline in the standard of care for pregnant women: "In fact, a study by a Johns Hopkins professor in 1912 indicated that most American doctors were *less* competent than midwives. Not only were the doctors themselves unreliable about preventing sepsis and ophthalmia but they also tended to be too ready to use surgical techniques which endangered mother or child" (*Witches* 34). It is important to remember that quality of care did not necessarily rise in tandem with scientific discovery, especially during this period of experimentation. Though physicians were arguably becoming more competent and more knowledgeable about the workings of the body, the experience of the average patient—particularly patients who did not have access to Johns Hopkins-trained physicians using state-of-the-art interventions—may not have changed all that much.

[32] The use of indigent patients as test or teaching cases in the advancement of medicine is a history fraught with sorrow and irony, as some of the treatments responsible for improving the quality of life of so many people, rich and poor, were purchased with the lives of the most vulnerable. As one physician has said to me quite eloquently, "The rich pay for medical care with their money. The poor pay with their bodies." That continues to be true in the United States today.

The story of the creation of the modern, regulated medical profession also features a bit of hypocrisy. Attaining authority and honor frequently required doctors to cooperate with irregular practitioners who possessed a considerable amount of cultural capital, regardless of their non-adherence to the scientific standards of the AMA. Paul Starr demonstrates how regular physicians collaborated with Eclectics and homeopaths—who enjoyed a considerable share of the market for medical care—to set licensing standards for each form of practice. These irregular practitioners were given seats on licensing boards, sometimes with the support of legal statutes and even the court system. Such a practice obviously flies in the face of the myth that "homeopaths and herbal doctors were suppressed by the dominant allopathic profession" (107). Rather, "Despite their historic efforts to avoid contact with sectarians, the regular physicians now found that a single integrated board worked better than multiple separate boards in controlling entry into the profession. Accordingly, they set aside their scruples about consorting with heretics and made common cause with them" (107). This collaboration would bear more fruit for the regulars than it would for the Eclectics and homeopaths, however, as the market for the latter two would decline precipitously during the first two decades of the twentieth century. This was due at least in part to the fact that regular doctors were producing vast amounts of new knowledge and new ideas backed up by experimentation and empirical observation, while homeopaths were not. Yet Starr suggests an additional theory of how these more dominant forms of irregular practice died out or faded into a distant background. They sold out:

> Both homeopathic and Eclectic doctors won a share in the legal privileges of the profession. Only afterward did they lose their popularity. When homeopathic and Eclectic doctors were shunned and denounced by the

> regular profession, they thrived. But the more they gained in access to the privileges of regular physicians, the more their numbers declined. (107)[33]

In addition to all of the reasons cited previously for the success of Christian Science during this period, perhaps we can add novelty and a certain amount of notoriety.

Rival Christian Scientists and Mental Healers

It is important to remember that though Christian Science was a frequent target for ridicule and invective, many well-heeled and well-educated individuals who thought Mary Baker Eddy a humbug were perfectly fine with the notion of mind cure. As a sort of second cousin of the emerging field of psychology, mind cure, when detached from metaphysics and religion, still sounded like perfectly good science to plenty of people. In *The Profits of Religion*, Upton Sinclair's self-published screed against religious groups who preyed upon the ignorant, the author and social justice advocate would confess to having tried mind cure "enough to satisfy myself that the subconscious mind which controls our physical functions can be powerfully influenced by the will" (258). It is Eddy's "flapping of metaphysical wings," her unacceptable blending of science and religion—as well as her particular "brand of Mammon" that gave offense (259, 261). J.T. M'Anally, writing in a 1900 issue of *The Illinois Medical Journal* would similarly accede that, "In view of what has been done in the line of mental healing, the public has a right to demand that physicians give it the benefit of this healing agency. It is a pleasant kind of treatment and possibly less expensive than drugs. It cures some cases when medicines fail, and it has no harmful effects following its use" (314). However, he insists that such treatments "should be taken out of the hands of ignorant enthusiasts and charlatans and utilized by those who know enough of the nature of diseases to recognize symptoms

[33] In 1913, enrollment in Eclectic schools was a quarter of what it had been a decade prior, and the number of homeopathic schools fell by half.

indicating the fitness for this agency and enough about science in general to realize that a means suitable to remove one condition may be altogether inadequate and unsuitable for the removal of another" (314).

Clearly not everyone agreed with M'Anally that mental approaches to healing should be absorbed by the regular medical profession. In addition to the gradual formation of psychology as its own field of specialization with a particular set of research and treatment protocols separate from the rest of medicine, various mind cure groups would pop up during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Some evolved independently of Christian Science, some in direct response to or as a sort of protest against it. Though Christian Science was tremendously successful in the late nineteenth century, almost from the beginning, Eddy had difficulty maintaining absolute conformity in her ranks, and splinter groups began breaking off. Most famous and successful among these offshoots was New Thought, which would come to be the dominant expression of mental healing doctrines in the twentieth century, the remains of which can still be seen in, for example, Rhonda Byrne's self-help book *The Secret*. Historian Beryl Satter shows how New Thought essentially began among Christian Scientists in Chicago who gradually began to move away from and revise Eddy's teachings into something they occasionally called Christian Science but also Mind Cure and Mental Science. [34] In 1888, she states, "Eddy was losing control of the movement she claimed to have originated, and not only in Chicago. While Eddy's followers in Boston abandoned her in increasing numbers, Boston itself was the location of at least six similar schools of mental healing that viewed each other as allies and Eddy as an enemy" (2). New Thought, as this movement eventually became known, revised and expanded Eddy's teachings to become

[34] Eddy would eventually copyright the term "Christian Science" in 1890 to prevent rival groups from appropriating it.

"a religious healing movement that claimed that 'spirit,' 'mind,' or human thought had the power to shape matter, overcome heredity, and mold desire" (9). Whereas Eddy's brand of mental healing tended to concentrate on the alleviation of suffering and disease, New Thought proponents were focused on using the mind to more broadly shape an ideal self. Among the middle classes, this often manifested as a cult of success, the belief that material success should inevitably accrue to those with sufficient mental discipline.

Like the medical profession, these movements staked their claims to legitimacy on their superior comprehension of scientific principles. But they also sought to draw away supporters of Eddy and discredit her in the public eye by questioning her claims to originality. Eddy was challenged by other former students of P.P. Quimby, who claimed that she had stolen and distorted their mentor's methods, and as I shall show in Chapter Four, other opponents of Christian Science were fairly quick to latch onto these allegations. In particular, Julius, Horatio, and Annetta Dresser were intent on proving that Mary Baker Eddy had directly plagiarized her theories and writings from the unpublished manuscripts of Quimby, an accusation that had considerable staying power in later histories of Christian Science, though, as Gillian Gill claims, "the evidence that Mary Baker Eddy's healing theology was based to any large extent on the Quimby manuscripts is not only weak but largely rigged" (146). Their claims were hampered by the fact that Quimby put few of his thoughts to paper during his lifetime, and his son George Quimby refused to offer his father's "manuscripts" (which were actually copies of copies of materials that various amanuenses had transcribed, either from Quimby's oral dictation or from various notes) up for public examination. Even Mark Twain in *Christian Science* would declare that "their testimony, while of consequence, lacks the most important detail; so far as my information goes, the Quimby manuscript has not been produced" (210). He goes on to say that "[Christian Scientists] believe that [Eddy], and not another,

built the Religion upon the book, and organized it. I believe it, too" (207). Though he conceded that she probably got

> [T]he mental-healing idea from Quimby—it had been experimented with for ages, and was no one's special property. … In each and all its forms and under all its many names, mental healing had had limits, always, and they were rather narrow ones—Mrs. Eddy, let us imagine, removed the fence, abolished the frontiers. Not by expanding mental healing but by absorbing its small bulk into the vaster bulk of Christian Science. (193)

Eddy's failure to show adequate indebtedness to P.P. Quimby throughout her career—even though the degree of that indebtedness was constantly in dispute—consistently came up in broader critiques of Christian Science, even those that came from outside of the mental healing movement. As I shall show in Chapter Four, this question is at the center of the *McClure's* biography. Among the many readers who wrote to *McClure's* about the series were those who claimed that Christian Science was a bastardized version of some form of ancient wisdom that had been rediscovered and rationalized by Quimby. As one Richard Armstrong, an avowed mental healer who eschewed religion, declared, "Her 'ideas' are old and are the common property of all the world. She stole them, because she does not give credit where credit is due. Her proposition is a very simple one, and she has made it complicated, she has done so intentionally, in order to throw mud in the eyes of her dupes" (Armstrong, 8 Nov. 1906). Likewise, Clara Bell Brown writes that "there is nothing of Mrs. Eddy's system of healing that was not known to students of 'Ancient Wisdom,' and no departure from the churches that differs in any way from opinions of the students of ancient lore" (Brown, 8 December 1906). She compares Mrs. Eddy's claim that she was the discoverer and founder of Christian Science to building a house from "Tennessee marble" and calling oneself "'founder' of the quarry from which I took the stone" (Brown, 8 December 1906).

The Dressers and their plagiarism accusations would emerge at a particularly sensitive time for Eddy and The First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston. Namely, the Dressers joined ranks with one Josephine Woodbury, who filed a highly publicized libel suit against Eddy and the Church leaders on July 31, 1899. This was hardly the first time that Eddy had been to court. In 1878, she successfully sued Richard Kennedy, her first student and business partner, for payments owed to her as a part of their contract. A similar suit against Daniel Spofford was dismissed by the judge, and Eddy's lawyer Edward Arens and her husband Asa Gilbert Eddy were eventually charged with Spofford's murder, charges which were also eventually dismissed. In short, Mrs. Eddy and the most longstanding members of her organization were well acquainted with courtroom drama as well as the use of the courtroom by enemies to attempt to publicly adjudicate the truth or falsehood of Eddy's teachings.[35]

I will discuss Josephine Woodbury in more detail in Chapter Three, because her case has direct bearing on the way in which we read Mark Twain's commentaries on Christian Science. Woodbury and her lawyer, Frederick Peabody, were, after all, major sources of (mis)information for the eminent author. Suffice it to say that Woodbury was expelled from the fellowship of the First Church in Boston for having a child out of wedlock with one of her male students and claiming that she had conceived the child "in Christian Science," i.e. asexually. Woodbury was also a kind of messianic figure in her own right, enjoying a cult-like following that made the supposedly slavish devotion of Eddy's followers look measured in comparison. In her lawsuit, she claimed that Eddy was referring to her when she mentioned the "Scarlet Woman" of Revelation in her

[35] Richard Kennedy attempted to nullify his contract with Eddy on the basis that her teachings were untrue. The judge decreed that "the nature and content of Mrs. Eddy's teaching was not at issue" and that Kennedy was still bound by his agreement (Gill 252). This represents one of the first attempts to bring the veracity of Eddy's teachings to bear on other legal issues, a strategy that the court system did not reward.

annual Communion Address. But the lawsuit was more than just a lawsuit. Woodbury would join forces with the Dressers and an ambitious lawyer named Frederick Peabody in an attempt to use the press and the courtroom to publically discredit Eddy once and for all. Their efforts were widely embraced by other critics of Christian Science, including members of the medical profession. A notice about the trial in a November 1899 issue of *The Illinois Medical Journal* reports that

> The part of the trial that will interest the people more generally is, that complainant's counsel, a leading member of the Boston bar, proposes to examine the doctrine of Christian Science from beginning to end and to scrutinize closely the career of Mrs. Eddy and the leaders of her church, and to submit its spiritual claims to cold judicial investigation. As this is the first time that this new doctrine has been submitted to the courts, it will prove of great interest to the public to have determined the question if a judge on a bench can skillfully dissect and understand the peculiar conglomeration of sentences and reversed reiterations of the repeating paragraphs of the "Bible Annex." We apprehend that a discerning legal mind will not be influenced while judicially considering the case by the "Can't you see?" [sic] (223).

The veracity of Eddy's religio-medical theories was, of course, immaterial to the libel question, and the judge threw out the case for lack of evidence. But this did not stop anyone involved from continuing to prosecute the details of Eddy's life and the veracity of her teachings in the eye of the public. Peabody would go on to make a career as a sort of anti-Christian Science pundit, publishing error-ridden accounts of Eddy's life and the goings on in her Church, accounts that continue to be cited uncritically even today. There is something ironic about the fact that the champions of scientific rationalism against obscurantism took up the cause of a woman who claimed to have conceived a son—a son she named Prince of Peace and instructed her own followers to worship—through parthenogensis. Peabody and other secular critics of Eddy tended to set aside the question of whether or not Woodbury still believed in many of the teachings of Christian Science (she did). Though one notice in *Gaillard's Medical Journal* comes close to

noting the strangeness of this alliance, it neatly sidesteps the tawdry circumstances behind the rift between Eddy and Woodbury:

> Outsiders will be interested principally in the revelation which this suit makes of the marvelous—almost incredible—assumption by this new apostle [Eddy], of a sort of divinity in her own person—founded on passages from the Book of Revelation. Not content with claiming to be the glorified woman referred to in the 12th chapter of Revelation as: "Clothed with the sun" and "with the sun and moon under her feet," &c.—she undertakes to destroy Mrs. Woodbury's character (against whom she had conceived a violent prejudice) by declaring in a public lecture that Mrs. Woodbury was the realization and fulfillment of the description given in the 17th chapter of the same book, of the "Scarlet Woman," the "Mother of Harlots," etc. It will be interesting to see just how this ecclesiastico-legal fight will terminate, although we are free to express the opinion that the majority of people outside will bet on the "Scarlet Woman," and will rejoice should the courts decide to give her the damages. (726) [36]

Woodbury was hardly the only upstart within Eddy's circle. Augusta E. Stetson, leader of the First Church of Christ, Scientist in New York would prove to be another obstacle to Eddy's effort to rid her movement of cults of personality. Stetson met Eddy in 1884 in Boston, and two years later, the founder of Christian Science sent Stetson—who was supporting herself and her invalid husband as a healer—to help establish the Church in New York. According to Rolf Swensen, Stetson quickly gained a following among the well-heeled and well-connected—including Alice Beecher Hooker Day, descendent of Lyman Beecher and Thomas Hooker—and resentment from other Christian Scientists, "caused in large part by her claim to be the designated leader of Eddy's flock in New York" (79). Stetson consolidated power by refusing to grant legitimacy to branch churches that operated outside of her control. She also encouraged her students to

[36] The claim that Eddy was somehow the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy was frequently attributed to her by critics, but did, in fact, originate with her followers. As Gill states, "There is overwhelming evidence that certain individuals and groups in the movement like to give Mrs. Eddy an exalted religious role—Ira Knapp and his son Bliss, for example, identified her as the woman crowned with stars named in Revelation. The evidence is equally strong, however, that Mary Baker Eddy herself was quick to see and to censure any attempt to make her or any of her works into what she liked to call a Dagon, a false image" (413).

venerate Mrs. Eddy to the point of idolatry and claimed to have a special relationship with her esteemed mentor that angered the object of her intense devotion as much as it did her rivals within the Christian Science fellowship. According to Swensen, "an exasperated Eddy chided Stetson for her 'tiresome egotism' and for being the 'most troublesome student I call loyal,' and warned that unless she reformed, the 'blow will at length fall and the stone you reject will grind you to powder'" (82).

These internal feuds, which were treated as national news, attest to the heterogeneous nature of Christian Science opposition, which produced a number of unlikely alliances between medical professionals, lawyers, legislators, and mental healers who were endeavoring to stake out their claims to cultural and scientific authority.

Public Interest Crusaders and Journalists

Investigative journalists—another new class of professionals making claims to special competence and authority based on the rhetoric of impartial observation—became intensely concerned with what they saw as the public menace presented by Eddy's church. And, like physicians and rival mental healers, they sought to use the power of discoverable facts to discredit Christian Science. And, in many cases, those efforts were both self-serving and productive of wild, scandalous inaccuracies. The *New York World* was an instigator in one of the most harrowing scandals to afflict Mrs. Eddy during the final years of her life, a scandal that inspired intense and intrusive scrutiny of her person and her life. According to Gill, Joseph Pulitzer was livid that "Sam McClure should both get the scoop on Christian Science and receive credit for stemming the tide of fake healing and religious mumbo jumbo" (471). When William Randolph Hearst announced his support for Christian Science, and reports began circulating that Mrs. Eddy had not attended the dedication of the Extension to the Mother Church in Boston, Pulitzer sprang

into action and "dispatched two of his crack reporters from the New York *World* up to Concord, New Hampshire [Eddy's birthplace], to get the story on Mary Baker Eddy" (472). Their search for a scoop led them to suspect that Mrs. Eddy in 1907, at the age of eighty-five, was mentally incapacitated and under the control of the men in her household.[37] Pulitzer managed to persuade none other than New Hampshire Senator William Chandler to file a lawsuit against the church leadership on behalf of George Glover, Eddy's only biological son.[38] The lawsuit, which ultimately became known at the Next Friends Suit, was eventually resolved in Eddy's favor, but as Stephen Gottschalk claims, "it was potentially more damaging to Eddy than any of the many crises that had marked her work in Christian Science" (13). Though Christian Science had attracted public scrutiny for the preceding two decades, Pulitzer's crusade—along with the *McClure's* biography—brought unprecedented levels of media attention on not only the Church itself but on Mary Baker Eddy as a person: "If the suit was an example of religious persecution, it was persecution in the distinctly twentieth-century form of a media event—indeed, a media-*orchestrated* event. Whatever its wider ramifications, it was instigated by the New York *World* to accomplish one of Joseph Pulitzer's major aims: selling newspapers" (13).

Like medicine, journalism was undergoing a sea change during the years in which Christian Science rose to public prominence and notoriety, and as with the antagonism of the medical profession, the efforts of the heads of major media outlets to combat the

[37] Rumors also circulated that Eddy was either dead or dying and that an impersonator had taken her place. Gill explains that all of these rumors were fueled by Eddy's increasing reclusiveness toward the end of her life, the result of both the stresses placed on her by the controversies surrounding her movement and her efforts to try to "dampen a cult of personality around her" (476).

[38] Gill's investigation into the primary documents surrounding the case suggests that Glover's involvement was entirely well-meaning and that Chandler appealed to George's "sense of duty and male chivalry" (487). Eddy's withdrawal from public life had included a withdrawal from her own family members, so George was most likely unaware of the exact nature of her circumstances in 1907.

growth of the movement mingled a sense of duty to the public interest with a desire to pursue personal interests, a desire to combat obscurantism with truth with a willingness to disregard facts where convenient. Gottschalk captures the contradictions of these impulses in his description of Pulitzer's legacy:

> He was in part motivated by a passionate desire to expose the abuse of the American political system at the hands of corrupt politicians controlled by monied interests. In this effort, he scored some notable triumphs, becoming one of the premier muckrakers in the field of journalism when there was a great deal of muck to rake. There was a difference, however, between muckraking—which, aside from Pulitzer's *World* and some other newspapers, was usually the province of periodicals such as *McClure's* magazine—and the outright sensationalism associated with "yellow journalism," the main exponent of which was Pulitzer's archrival, William Randolph Hearst. But the difference was not absolute. "Pulitzer's audacity and his historical accomplishment," writes historian Richard Norton Smith, "lay in trying to supply it all—high-minded editorials and socially conscious crusades alongside a gritty procession of headless corpses, adulterous clergy, and circulation-boosting stunts." (*Rolling* 13)

This new set of priorities contributed to the refashioning of journalism as a profession of its own. As historian Regina Morantz-Sanchez states in her book on the media fracas surrounding the controversial practice of a female doctor in Brooklyn, "the press increasingly defined itself as a distinct entity with a duty to the public to observe, investigate, and report public proceedings, monitor the actions of public officials and reveal all matters of public interest" (*Conduct* 53). She echoes Michael Schudson's argument that—like doctors and other professionals who made claims about special competence based on their scientific training—journalists increasingly saw their work as akin to science, "uncovering the economic and political facts of industrial life more boldly, more clearly, and more 'realistically' than anyone had done before. This was part of the broader Progressive drive to found political reform on 'facts'" (Schudson 77).

These were, of course, the same scientific claims that Mrs. Eddy was in the process of rewriting in religious terms.

The *McClure's* team took this mandate to bring objective fact to bear on the problem of Christian Science by seeking out sworn affidavits from those who knew Mrs. Eddy both before and after she founded her movement. As I shall show in Chapter Four, Milmine, Willa Cather and other members of the editorial team really did achieve something remarkable in their attempt to construct a history of Christian Science based on primary accounts. But those efforts were compromised by the naïve assumption that eye-witnesses are always reliable and as such, the biography managed to enshrine some rather egregious (and surprisingly detectable) errors about Mrs. Eddy's personal life. Of all people, the *McClure's* team engaged Frederick Peabody—who, after losing Josephine Woodbury's case in 1899, had becoming increasingly vindictive toward Mary Baker Eddy—to take many of the affidavits, and he often sought them out from individuals who harbored an abiding resentment of Mrs. Eddy. The series was "as much a work of polemic as a piece of reporting. When it vows, as it were, hand on heart, to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, when it claims not rhetoric but reportage, not passion but objectivity, it lies and compromises the very truth of the standards it claims to espouse" (Gill 568).

Why, however, was Christian Science viewed to be dangerous to the public interest? As I have argued in this chapter, Eddy's opponents were at least partially motivated by the desire to protect newly defined professional prerogatives, by the desire to claim cultural authority (and often seize economic gain) by positioning themselves as defenders of a newly liberated science against the forces of superstition and ignorance. This redefinition of professional mandates and privileges inevitably entailed the policing of class and gender lines in order to determine which sorts of people were allowed to

make claims under the aegis of "science" and which were not. But the success of Christian Science as a movement and Mrs. Eddy as an individual provoked concern and anger in ways that are easier to quantify.

For one thing, the immense wealth controlled by Eddy and the Church—which was usually vastly over-estimated—provoked the muckraker's suspicion of the danger posed to democracy by the concentration of money and political influence in the hands of a few. The fact that this wealthy, influential organization was led by a woman only heightened this antagonism. Church affairs and Mrs. Eddy's power within the organization would become a dominant theme in criticisms of her movement. As I shall show in Chapter Three, the irresponsible exercise of power was Mark Twain's primary concern in *Christian Science* and his other writings on Mary Baker Eddy. He often speculated that Christian Science was positioned to become the dominant world religion and in the satirical "Secret History of Eddypus," imagined that she and her successors would become the new papacy in a dystopian future. For Twain and many other critics, opposition to Christian Science was uncomfortably linked to anti-Catholicism and a broader suspicion of religious traditions designated as "other," including Islam and Mormonism.[39] Comparisons of Mrs. Eddy to the Pope and the "Grand Lama" were frequent. Likewise, editorial notices for *McClure's* would compare their *Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy* to Ida Tarbell's 1904 exposure of Rockefeller and Standard Oil. Some of the more histrionic letters written to *McClure's* while the series was running (and to a certain degree, the articles themselves) revealed that the public estimation of Mrs. Eddy's

[39] For the relationship between Twain's anti-Catholicism and his opposition to Christian Science, see Schrager.

power, particularly in her own organization, was exaggerated.[40] There were some for whom Mrs. Eddy was all-powerful, capable of extending her malevolent influence into every aspect of her enemies' lives. Says one anonymous writer, speaking of the "dynamic power of the C.S. government," "I am one who became entangled in this whirlpool of mental force, and whom it will yet probably kill" (Anonymous, n.d.). This belief probably stemmed from the belief in Malicious Animal Magnetism, which held that minds could influence and inflict damage on other persons from across great distances.

But while acknowledging that the fear of Christian Science was based, to a certain degree, on caricature and on a broader paranoia about the encroachment of alien religious traditions on reliably Protestant soil and the entrance of women and minorities into the public sphere, we must also affirm that people in Mary Baker Eddy's time (and today, for that matter) were concerned that the rising popularity of Christian Science would result in loss of life. Indeed, a 1991 study conducted by the CDC compared graduates of Principia College (a liberal arts college for Christian Scientists) to that of Loma Linda University (affiliated with the Seventh Day Adventists, who accept both medical and spiritual healing) between 1945 and 1983 and found that the graduates of Principia had higher mortality rates.[41] Sensational reports about the deaths of individuals to treatable diseases in Christian Science homes have garnered media attention from Eddy's time to our own.

Yet the question of culpability—both moral and legal—in these cases is rarely easy to determine. The 1898 death of novelist and *New York Times* correspondent Harold

---

[40] It should be noted, however, that Christian Scientists regularly overstated their membership numbers and financial holdings, so they probably contributed (even knowingly) to the outsized place that the organization held in the public imagination.

[41] Though the same study cites two possible biases: that individuals lost to follow-up were assumed to be still alive and that the study did not control for lifestyle factors other than religion, a particularly relevant concern in a study that includes Seventh-Day Adventists, who adhere to dietary habits (such as vegetarianism) associated with lower risk of mortality and chronic illness.

Frederic in Great Britain and the trial of Kate Lyon and Athalie Mills, the Christian Scientists who treated him is a particularly instructive case. At the time of his death, Frederic was financially supporting two families: his legitimate family in the U.S. and his family with Lyon in England. According to Bridget Bennett, Frederic's health began declining in 1898, largely as a result of the stress of his double life: "In March he began to lose weight rapidly, and a dose of what he believed to be food poisoning in early summer resulted in what was probably a minor stroke" (51). This was followed by a much more severe stroke on August 12, which left him paralyzed on one side of his body. Kate Lyon treated Frederic through the methods of Christian Science, but a Dr. Nathan Ellington Boyd was also involved in the case. Boyd recommended a "restricted diet," to which Frederic refused to adhere. On August 16, Lyon enlisted the help of Athalie Goodman Mills, a local Christian Science practitioner, who enjoined Frederic to give up medical treatment but eventually granted him special dispensation to continue receiving the services of Dr. Boyd in addition to Christian Science treatments. On the 17th, Frederic requested a solicitor in order to dictate his will, and Dr. Hubert Montague Murray was summoned by Dr. Boyd to diagnose Frederic with "paralysis and an 'affectation of the heart'" (53). Frederic consistently refused to follow the orders of his doctors. On the 19th, he dismissed Boyd entirely in a fit of apoplectic rage, saying that "doctors were killing him but Christian Science could cure him within two days. Boyd wrote to Lyon warning her that if Frederic died, she would probably be tried for manslaughter. She wrote back requesting that he stop attending Frederic" (54). He was treated thereafter by Drs. Brown and Freyburger, who also prescribed dietary restrictions and bed rest and also found the patient non-compliant. According to Bennett, "Freyberger was convinced that Frederic was not in his right mind and that he was being unduly influenced by Kate Lyon—he

claimed at one point that she formulates his thought for him" (54). By September 20, Frederic had renounced medical treatment entirely, and by late October, he was dead.

Bennett argues that Frederic's turn to Christian Science was the act of a desperate man: "[Frederic] was not a Christian Scientist although he was interested in the successful cures that it claimed for itself. His mother had been a great believer in the power of the mind (positive thinking), and Frederic had inherited a belief that mental attitude could influence the physical state of the body" (55). Dr. Freyburger, who attended him in his final moments, reported that Frederic denounced the treatment of Mrs. Mills as not a "bit of good" (55). His death was reported in *The New York Times*, the beginning of a two month campaign covering the deaths of patients under the care of Christian Scientists. A long investigative piece on the branch churches in New York was published on November 13, 1898, following the appearance of the indelicately titled "Faith Cure Murders" two days prior. Lyon and Mills were eventually tried for manslaughter but ultimately acquitted for lack of evidence, even though a coroner's inquest had originally found them guilty. As with almost all prosecutions of Christian Science, the case involved complex questions of informed consent, the mental competence of the patient, therapeutic choice, the likelihood that the patient would have improved under the exclusive care of his regular physicians (far from certain), and the influence of Christian Scientist caregivers. One editorial in *The Outlook* formulated the problem thus,

> If a sane man chooses to eschew all physicians, to refuse all means of cure, to deny himself all remedies, and to depend wholly upon means unrecognized by modern science to effect a cure, may the law interfere? If he should determine to live without eating, or in a winter climate without fuel—and it is difficult to see why hunger and cold are not "mortal thoughts" as truly as disease—must the law leave him to starve or freeze to death? If not, is there any more reason why it should allow him to die of disease which science could remedy if he would take the remedies? In

> short, what are the rights and the duties of the community in protecting an individual from inflicting what the community believes to be needless and perhaps fatal injuries upon himself? (710)

The author offers no answers. Many critics of Christian Science saw the Frederic case as a clear indicator that legal action must be taken to curtail the activities of irregular practitioners. A writer for *Medical Review* called the restraint of the law a "scandalous inadequacy" (86). Rather than a matter of informed consent and therapeutic choice, the writer depicts the Frederic case as one of brainwashing: "But for the fatal interference of the Christian Scientists, both Major Lester and Mr. Harold Frederic would, in all probability, still be with us, doing their good work" (86). *The Medical Herald* (reprinting an item from the *Philadelphia Medical Journal*) would similarly call Frederic a "victim" of Christian Science and insist that the case proved "that an erartic [sic] mind may coexist with considerable literary talent and that a sick man is not fitted to be trusted with his own disabled body" (508). *The Independent* would similarly open an article with the sentence, "Harold Frederic died of Christian Science" (1285). *The New York Times* would declare that though "the largest liberty of opinion in matters of faith and religion must be accorded to the people of all free countries" and that there "should be absolute freedom of choice among the several schools of medicine," legal tolerance of Christian Science was quite simply beyond the pale: "the most liberal theory of law and public policy would never sanction the issue of licenses to 'healers' whose system bears no closer relation to recognized therapeutics than the incantations of an Indian medicine man. If the thing cannot be licensed it cannot be tolerated. Its evil and fatal effects have been demonstrated" ("Faith Cure" 6).

Not all commentators saw the problem in such stark terms, however. The Chicago-based legal journal *The Public* argued that therapeutic freedom—even the

freedom to refuse treatment or pursue unconventional treatments—was, in fact, essential to scientific progress:

> The real difficulty in determining the relation of the healing phase of Christian Science to the law, does not rise out of cases like that of Harold Frederic, in which a sane man, in the exercise of his undeniable right to belief, deliberately refuses the assistance of doctors and puts his trust in Christian Science. It is no function of the public to force doctors upon such a man. Not only is it his right to decide for himself, but if he were denied that right the healing profession might be stagnated. Had police regulations successfully interfered with freedom of choice in this respect in the past, the new schools of medicine that have from time to time challenged and ultimately modified the old, would have been suppressed; and like the law-protected Chinese, we might still measure the usefulness of a physician by the amount of blood he draw and the virtues of drugs by their nastiness. (7-8)

Even this writer, however, would insist that the treatment of children must, to some degree, be regulated by the state: "Because mature persons have the right, in the treatment of their own ills, to ignore public sentiment as it at any time exists, it by no means follows that they have the right to do so in the treatment of the ills of their children. … society owes to the child the duty of protecting its right to life not only against what may appear to the community to be the malice of parents, but also . . . their foolishness" (8). As Rennie B. Schoepflin indicates, the rise in activism on the behalf of children led to increased concerns about how the unorthodox therapeutic choices of parents affected their offspring, a heated and emotional debate that continues to be played out today. Children became central to the public debates over informed consent, parental responsibility, and the regulation or criminalization of Christian Science activities: "Of the thirty-six pre-1921 Christian Science cases involving healing practices that I have identified, twenty-one (58.3 percent) involved a sick child, and in at least sixteen (44.4 percent) the death of a child precipitated the trial" (Schoepflin 184). Eight of the ten manslaughter charges involved the death of children. These cases sparked widespread

public outrage, aided by the efforts of crusading newspapers. As the *New York Evening Journal* editorialized following the death of a seven-year old to diphtheria under the care of her Christian Scientist parents, the child

> Was allowed to die, and it did die, while a so-called faith-curer, or alleged "healer," prayed and went through various incantations as senseless, as hopeless, and as vicious in a case of diphtheria as would be the contortions of some negress of the voodoo faith twisting serpents around her neck to achieve a medical result. … An example is needed now. If any alleged healer, pretending to cure that child, deprived her of medical aid, and without legal license pretended to practice the healing art, he should be convicted of manslaughter and put in jail for a term sufficiently long to act as a preventive to him and A WARNING TO OTHERS. (Qtd. in Schoepflin 187)

These feverish accusations, however, were not enough to persuade certain medical and legal experts that Christian Scientist parents ought to be jailed purely for imposing their therapeutic and religious beliefs on their children. For one thing, even medical doctors acknowledged the difficulty in proving that medical intervention would have saved such cases:

> John Carroll Lathrop, the practitioner who had attended the child, met reporters later that evening to express his heartfelt regrets "that the child was not cured, but at the same time I think it is very well to remember that Christian Scientists are not the only people who occasionally lose a patient." William D. McCracken, the Committee on Publication for the state of New York, agreed with Lathrop. He believed that "the mere fact that a method of healing the sick is chosen by the parents which is not in accordance with the prevailing notion does not suffice to establish the charge of neglect, else there could be no advance in the art of healing. Even should a failure or casualty result after Christian Science treatment has been given, this occurrence cannot be taken as evidence of neglect on the part of the parents, for such failures occur daily in great numbers under the most approved treatments of material medica." (Schoepflin 186)

The Christian Science Journal echoed such sentiments in the Frederic case, saying "that the general practice of medicine is experimental; that good results are obtained every day by regular practitioners from the use of harmless and non-medical tinctures. We also

know that oftentimes prescriptions which cure or modify the symptoms of one patient signally fail in another case of the same character" (622).

Questions of public policy in the matters concerning Christian Science have always been complicated by the simple fact that it is difficult to determine in any given case whether or not a patient's recovery could be guaranteed under a different form of treatment. It is a problem that continues to arise in medical malpractice cases to this day. Nevertheless, on March 23, 2010, the *Times* reported that "faced with dwindling membership and blows to their church's reputation caused by its intransigence concerning medical treatment, even for children with grave illnesses, Christian Science leaders have recently found a new tolerance for medical care" (Vitello). Reportedly, church leaders encourage parents to follow the dictates of their conscience, and anecdotal evidence suggests that many Christian Science parents use some combination of regular medical treatment and spiritual healing, though many refuse to carry health insurance or vaccinate their children.[42]

CONCLUSION

The story of Christian Science is not a story in which a resolute but misguided band of believers stood against the advancing tide of modernity, seeking to restore the dominance of religion over an upstart science. Instead, it is a story in which the vocabularies of science and spirituality, reason and affect were summoned to provide

[42] Val Kilmer, currently among the highest profile Christian Scientists in the U.S., told Chuck Klosterman, "There is a big misnomer with Christian Science. People used to say, 'Christian Science. Oh, you're the ones that don't believe in doctors,' which is not a true thing. It's just a different way of treating a malady. It could be mental, social, or physical. When Wesley [Kilmer's brother] was diagnosed [with epilepsy], he was given medical treatment. When he was in school, they would stop the treatment. Then periodically, he would go back and forth between Christian Science and medical treatment." When asked if he would treat his daughter with antibiotics if she had a sore throat, "he tells me that because he's divorced, he doesn't have complete control over that type of decision. But he says his first move in such a scenario would be to pray, because most illness comes from fear" (Klosterman).

solutions to the problems of human suffering. As I shall argue in Chapter Two, these solutions were prompted—even demanded—by a modern paradigm that expected the contingencies of the body to be conquered by the power of the rational mind. Furthermore, it is a story in which various competing groups vied for power by defining who was allowed to lay claim to the authority of science, and this was a contest that was as much about who a scientist could be as it was about the content of scientific knowledge.

In the upcoming chapters, I shall examine the different stories that both Christian Science sympathizers and antagonists told to explain the success and importance of the movement. These narratives need not be taken simply at face value or read with twenty-first century retrospective judgments about whether or not there was or is anything of value in Christian Science or mind cure. Rather, they need to be read as products of a time in which questions about the nature of disease, the relationship between mind and body, the role of the medical profession, and the tension between individual freedom and civic responsibility were particularly unresolved. By reading these narratives in this light, we can come to a better understanding of the role that science, religion, and even narrative itself played in the fashioning of twentieth century American culture.

CHAPTER TWO—"A Demonstrative System of Healing": The Christian Science Journal and the Power of Narrative

"Christian Science rests on proof, not profession. It is not a theory, but a demonstrative system of healing, and it must be support by proof of its power to heal. It is only in this way that the false Scientist and the true are discerned, and the people undeceived."
—Rev. Mary B. G. Eddy
(epigraph to the "Healing and Reports of Cases" section in the *Christian Science Journal* from 1889-1890)

As news of the Harold Frederic case and the trial of the two women who cared for him circulated in major newspapers, Mary Baker Eddy became deeply conscious of the damage such publicity could do to her movement. Yet she blamed, as she often did, not the newspapers or the law for persecuting the Christian Science healers, but the healers themselves for their lack of wisdom and mastery. Writing to Julia Field-King on December 2, 1898, she enjoins, "Teach your dear students, whom I deeply pity, wisdom, to be as wise as serpents. Never to take a case of so doubtful a kind and conspicuous and with so many minds turned on it without counting the cost and knowing that they can hold it and heal it" (Advice, 2: 71). She laments the fact that members of her movement seem more inclined to teach than to heal, reducing the number of qualified healers in the field: "we need good safe practitioners more than teachers, a million times more. … No person ought to teach who is not the very best healer" (Advice, 2: 71). Throughout the last decade of her life, she continually warned her followers against the crisis that would inevitably ensue if Christian Science ceased producing "demonstrations" and became a theoretical rather than a practical religion. As she would tell Augusta Stetson in 1903, "healing the sick and reforming the sinner demonstrate Christian Science, and nothing else can" (Advice, 3: 51). Healing, she told her students, was a calling far higher than preaching or leadership, because it was the best tool for growing the faith. As she would tell Archibald McClellan, "Healing is the best sermon, healing is the best lecture, and the

entire demonstration of C.S." (Advice, 3: 54). Likewise, she wrote to Ezra Buswell, "Preaching and teaching are of no use without proof of what is taught and said" (Advice to Healers, 3: 56).

Though spirituality and metaphysics were the heart and soul of Eddy's teachings, she was also an immensely practical woman who saw that the appeal of her movement lay in its claims to produce observable results. [43] Furthermore, she believed that those results distinguished her religion from all others: "One case healed is more than other denominations can do, whereas all sects can preach and teach more scholarly than the majority of Christian Scientists" (Advice, 3: 56). Even observers from outside Eddy's fold would acknowledge that Christian Scientists were getting some practical results, though they would argue that these healers simply misunderstood what they were doing and observing. As Richard Cabot argued in 1908, "But although it is easy thus to refute the Christian Scientists [on their theology or science], such refutation satisfies no one and proves nothing except their logical bankruptcy. The victory over their weak-kneed theory is a barren one, for is it not notorious that people's practice may be better than their theory?" (472). Printed in *McClure's*, this assessment—that Christian Science was theoretically faulty but produced practical results—also appeared in the biography that ran in the same magazine during 1907 and 1908. Similarly, William James said of those who claimed to be healed by Christian Science or another form of mental healing, "These are exceedingly trivial instances, but in them, if we have anything at all, we have the method of experiment and verification. For the point I am driving at now, it makes no

[43] As Drew Gilpin Faust explains in *This Republic of Suffering*, the need for religio-scientific explanations for and rationalizations of death was heightened in wake of the unimaginable carnage of the Civil War. Faust focuses on the American preoccupation with spiritualism in the latter half of the nineteenth century as satisfying this need: "To an age increasingly caught up in the notion of science as the measure of truth, spiritualism offered belief that seemed to rely on empirical evidence rather than revelation and faith" (180). Christian Science, which emerged in the same New England communities that had formerly embraced spiritualism, found a way to accommodate both empiricism and faith.

difference whether you consider the patients to be deluded victims of their imagination or not. That they seemed to *themselves* to have been cured by the experiments tried was enough to make them converts to the system" (121).

Eddy's belief in the power of practical demonstration to win hearts and minds is embodied in *The Christian Science Journal*, a monthly periodical established in 1883 that printed—in addition to news relevant to the movement, sermons, commentary by noteworthy Scientists, and poetry—testimonials or accounts written by people who had been healed or who had witnessed a healing. Mrs. Eddy frequently acknowledged these narratives as her best recruitment tool, and they are also among the best primary records available to anyone interested in how the Christian Science movement gained a following.[44] In addition to serving as propaganda, they show that Christian Science provided a vocabulary and a narrative template that enabled acolytes to integrate both illness and healing into internally coherent personal narratives about spiritual discovery and growth.

THE *JOURNAL* AND NARRATIVE FORM IN THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE TRADITION

Christian Science is a profoundly literary tradition, and print materials have always played a central role in the dissemination of ideology and methodology. The center of devotion and outreach continues to be the near ubiquitous Reading Rooms, which are open to the public for the perusal of Christian Science literature. Church services privilege the reading of Scripture and *Science and Health* over original oratory

[44] Cabot attempted to verify 100 of these accounts in his *McClure's* article with mixed results. Some, he said, were genuine, some cases of misdiagnosis, and some were only temporarily relieved. Penny Hansen also attempted a systematic analysis of these accounts from a feminist perspective in her 1981 dissertation.

or sermons, and *The Christian Science Monitor*,[45] founded in 1908 by Mary Baker Eddy herself, has been a mainstay of American journalism for over a century. In fact, the Christian Science Publishing Society issues three major periodicals, each with their own distinctive purposes. *The Christian Science Journal*, unlike the *Monitor*, is an explicitly religious periodical with a pedagogical intent, and its current website heralds it as an outlet for "instructive articles and verified reports of Christian Science healing, to help you understand the divine Principle, and apply the practice, of Christian Science" (Journal). Founded in 1883, the *Journal* used first-hand accounts of healing to promote the cause of Christian Science and to encourage co-religionists. Both new converts and experienced practitioners wrote in to describe their healing experiences. These narratives evolved from perfunctory descriptions of the disease and mode of healing in the 1880s to lengthy, emotional testimonials in the 1890s and beyond.

Journal narratives have served as primary sources for historians of Christian Science for a century, though some scholars object to their use. They were selected by an editorial board for maximum impact and were certainly part of the Church's propaganda arm. In *Christian Science on Trial*, published in 2003, Rennie B. Schoepflin questions their representativeness, referring to the economic interest of practitioners to explain why they were published in the first place: "If anyone could heal herself by reading and applying *Science and Health*, then practitioners might have fewer patients and their practices would suffer" (36). Others, including the *McClure's* team, have implied that the accounts were fabricated or heavily edited. Having had the opportunity to review the

[45] *The Christian Science Monitor* has a fascinating history in and of itself. Eddy conceived of it as an antidote to the biased and inaccurate reporting of mainstream newspapers, which had attacked her repeatedly in print. The *Monitor* was not intended to be an explicitly religious newspaper, though it features a religious article once a week. The *Monitor* website describes the periodical as "a real news organization owned by a church." *Monitor* reporters have won seven Pulitzer Prizes since 1950, a rather ironic achievement considering Joseph Pulitzer's print crusade against Eddy in the first decade of the twentieth century. See www.csmonitor.com.

correspondence files at the Mary Baker Eddy Library, I have learned a bit more about editorial practice at *The Christian Science Journal* and can state with some assurance that these latter concerns are largely unfounded. The files are full of letters written to Mrs. Eddy that were eventually published in the *Journal*, and the manuscripts that were eventually published have been archived alongside a page proof from the *Journal* itself. The proofs and editorial marks indicate that—without completely ruling out exceptions—these accounts were printed in their entirety and edited only slightly, usually just for spelling and punctuation, all the way up to 1910, where the file ends. In any case, I would argue that the *Journal* narratives are helpful not because they give us faithful accounts of precisely what happened but because they help us see how Christian Science institutional discourse developed and, in a very real way, shaped the experiences and accounts of practitioners and lay believers. These accounts are expressions of desire, narratives of hope and promise, as much as they are attempts at accurate reportage. As medical humanities scholar Santayani DasGupta argues, "literal veracity, a one-to-one mapping of life onto representation, cannot be expected from illness stories," whether those stories are told in the clinic or in a religious periodical (448).[46] Furthermore, we can learn a great deal from what is absent in these narratives—what was *not* published—just as we can learn from what was.

An interdisciplinary body of theory, known as Narrative Medicine is helpful in explaining the role that narrative plays in shaping experiences of illness and creating institutional discourses.[47] In *The Wounded* Storyteller, Arthur Frank argues that the ability to tell stories about illness is transformative and empowering: "The ill person who

[46] For more on concerns about authenticity and accuracy in illness narratives, see Garden and Shapiro.

[47] For a helpful overeview of the field, see Charon, *Narrative Medicine*; Rudnytsky and Charon, *Psychoanalysis and Narrative Medicine*.

turns illness into story transforms fate into experience; the disease that sets the body apart from others becomes, in the story, the common bond of suffering that joins bodies in their shared vulnerability" (xi). Illness narratives may employ a range of available tropes, including modern medical diagnostic language, religious or moral themes (as in themes of punishment for sin or tests of faith), or explanations borrowed from alternative medical theories. In the *Journal* narratives, as in many illness narratives, these seemingly disparate vocabularies blend and intersect in intriguing and unexpected ways. Rita Charon argues that seeing illness experience through the grid of personal narratives—which may or may not be told in purely scientific or scientifically accurate terms—need not conflict with a commitment to scientific rigor. She advocates for a medical practice that accommodates these individual narratives by "recognizing, absorbing, interpreting, and being moved by the stories of illness" (*Narrative* 4). The same can be asked of researchers who approach Christian Science. Rather than seeking to explain away illness and healing narratives that do not fit our particular understanding of how such processes work, it behooves the reader of the *Journal* account to first pay attention to what they are trying to say, to, as Rita Charon says "enter others' narrative worlds and accept them—at least provisionally—as true" (*Narrative* 10).

Illness narratives are inevitably shaped by the cultural and institutional contexts from which they emerge. As Arthur Kleinman indicates, illness is a profoundly social experience. The tropes, metaphors, and diction that the story-tellers deploy inevitably reflect the influence of caregivers, family and community members, and may attempt to mirror the expectations of the listener:

> Illness refers to how the sick person and the members of the family or wider social network perceive, live with, and respond to symptoms and disability. Illness is the lived experience of monitoring bodily processes such as respiratory wheezes, abdominal cramps, stuffed sinuses, or painful joints. Illness involves the appraisal of those processes as expectable,

> serious, or requiring treatment. The illness experience includes categorizing and explaining, in common-sense ways accessible to all lay persons in the social group, the forms of distress caused by pathophysiological processes. And when we speak of illness, we must include the patient's judgment about how best to cope with the distress and with the practical problems in daily living it creates. (4)

As such, illness narratives have performative and pedagogical, in addition to therapeutic, dimensions. They transmit cultural expectations about how the illness process works, prompting the ill person to create, perform, and re-inscribe those expectations into the stories they tell about their experience. The cultural milieu in which Mary Baker Eddy and her contemporaries experienced illness was, as I have shown in the previous chapter, highly complex. Illness continued to have spiritual and moral valence. Public health advocates continued to link the goal of eradicating disease to the moral health of a society. Germ theory, with its identification of specific pathogens, was not widely accepted, even among regular medical practitioners. Yet the language of science was beginning to achieve a certain level of cultural authority. As such, Christian Science may have proved attractive precisely because it synthesized a religio-scientific vocabulary.

Frank identifies a subset of illness narrative that proves particularly useful in describing the role that the *Journal* accounts play in Christian Science discourse. "Restitution narratives," which define a predictable narrative trajectory that moves from sickness to health, reflect the individual's desire to get well and society's intolerance and fear of illness. The function of restitution narratives is therapeutic: they help people construct meaningful, hopeful stories about their path to or their expectations for wellness. But they are also models that the ill person may be expected to emulate: "People learn this narrative from institutional stories that model how illness is to be told" (78). He invokes the image of the "awareness" pamphlet, which "provides models of stories patients ought to tell about their own illnesses," and pharmaceutical ads, which "condition expectations for how sickness progresses" (79). In restitution narratives, the

treatment or practitioner is the star, not necessarily the patient. These are stories about triumphs of innovation, ingenuity, or "the human spirit" over frailty and death. "Restitution stories bear witness not to the struggles of the self but to the expertise of others: their competence and their caring that effect the cure" (92).

Christian Science narratives function in precisely the same way, constructing ideal models for the progression of healing and offering proof for the validity of the method. These narratives both represent and structure the experiences of those who read and write them. They offer an outlet for illness narratives while providing and reduplicating templates for those narratives. The restitution narrative is also a helpful way of understanding Christian Science accounts because of its spiritual dimensions: "Job, after all his suffering, has his wealth and family restored, and whether or not that restoration was a later interpolation into the text, its place in the canonical version of the story shows the power of the restitution storyline" (Frank 80). As with Job, the *Journal* narratives show that spiritual work has to be done, both by the expert and the patient, in order for healing to occur—one's inner demons must be confronted, doubts assuaged, faith fortified—and restitution is the reward for performing that work, for being faithful. Conversion, of course, is a kind of restitution narrative, a journey from sin into grace, another expression of the transcendent desire for spiritual renewal and of the modern desire for telos. The spiritual biographies of religious exemplars have, of course, been central to the Christian tradition since the Church Fathers, but the American evangelical Protestant tradition, in particular, places a great degree of emphasis on the dissemination of lay "testimonies," the vernacular term for one's narrative of conversion to Christianity. The *Journal* accounts contain some of the familiar elements of Christian testimonies, including narrative arcs that begin with sin and despair (some of these are narratives of recovery from addiction) and culminate in redemption. Because Christian Science treats

disorders of body, mind, and spirit holistically, the writers interpret their bodily suffering and healing as direct signs of spiritual degradation and restoration.

Christian Science is ultimately subject to the limitations of the restitution narrative. Because the method rather than the patient structures and determines the story, failures and incomplete results have to be subsumed into the narrative in a manner that leaves the method intact. As I shall show, this usually takes the form of blaming the patient for not attending to the regimen strictly enough or not wholly submitting to the treatment, a weakness that Frank identifies in all restitution narratives.[48] The *Journal* and the unpublished letters to Mrs. Eddy indicate that many avowed Christian Scientists blamed the chronicity of their conditions on themselves. Modern medicine has evolved a whole language of non-compliance to explain the ineffectiveness of credible treatments for individual patients. When Christian Science fails it is because the patient's belief is not yet strong enough, his understanding of divine principle not yet complete. Eddy thought that the ultimate achievement of her method would be immortality, and the spiritual work of the Christian Scientist was viewed as an open-ended, recursive process that would only ever be completed once disease, aging, and death had been eradicated.[49] For like all restitution narratives, as Frank explains, Christian Science is an expression of the modern deconstruction of mortality, the desire to render death obsolete through the power of rationality and invention. As Zygmunt Bauman says, "Modernity is drive to mastery; a mode of being shot through with hope, ambition, and confidence—a

[48] See Garden's similar critique of the restitution or recovery narrative.

[49] She did not, however, believe that this had been or would be accomplished in her lifetime. Upon learning that two particularly enthusiastic followers, Ira Knapp and his son Bliss, were keeping the corpse of another Christian Scientist in their house, hoping to resurrect him, she wrote to them in horror and disbelief, "for if you could not or did not heal him what is your precedent for your present movement? You have none in the Bible nor in Science and Health. Raise yourself from this spell of mesmerism or you will be removed at once from the C.S. Board of Directors" (Advice, 3: 83).

behavioral-attitudinal complex correlated with what Francois Lyotard described as the Cartesian determination to graft finality upon a time-series ordered by subordination and appropriation of 'nature'" (Bauman 132-3). For moderns, death is a scandal, "an emphatic denial of everything that the brave new world of modernity stood for, and above all of its arrogant promise of the indivisible sovereignty of reason" (Bauman 134). Christian Science is quintessentially modern not only in its desire to make death and the contingent body obsolete but in its effort to do so by subordinating nature to the power of the mind. Yet its unique contribution lay in fusing that rationalism with religion and spirituality.

Characteristics of *Journal* Healing Narratives and their Authors

The following observations are based on the healing and conversion narratives contained in a sample of *Christian Science Journal* issues that were published between 1885 and 1899, supplemented with hundreds of unpublished letters to Mary Baker Eddy and members of her household from the archives at the Mary Baker Eddy Library. Before analyzing the specific ways in which Christian Scientists described the illness experience, it may be helpful to answer some questions about who exactly wrote them. In an ideal world, I would be able to offer up a sociodemographic portrait of the average *Journal* author, but information about gender, occupation, class, and residence is available only haphazardly. The willingness of *Journal* writers and editors to publish personal information depended on the political climate. Some early issues include name and street address, but in most cases, only initials and a city and state are available. Contextual clues often indicate something about occupation, leisure activities, family status, etc. In the early issues, the name of the attending practitioner was actually listed, but in April 1889, a notice began appearing at the top of the "Healing and Reports of

Cases" section regarding the *Journal's* efforts to protect the privacy of both healer and patient:

> Reports of Cases. Notice is hearby given that while the names of healers will never be given in these columns, and in many cases, for obvious reasons, those of the patients may not be, a record of both is kept by the editor. Any person desiring to be put in communication with either, will please address the editor, (enclosing a stamp for return postage,) stating in what case they are interested.
>
> The publication of cases has two objects; the first, the help and encouragement of Scientists, and second , to lead those unacquainted with Science to look into its claims. Inquiries are therefore invited from all persons interested. That all readers may know whether a particular case is within reach of personal investigation, the place of residence of healer or patient will, as in the cases below, be given. In all cases where objection is not made it is desirable to publish the patient's name. (7.1: 37)

Scientists clearly wished these stories to act as verifiable references for the works of the church even as they pragmatically sought to protect their practitioners and patients from reprisals.

The stereotypical Christian Scientist and author of healing narratives is female. Critics of the movement often pointed to the predominance of women in the movement as a sign of its intellectual bankruptcy. However, twentieth century feminist scholars have often seized upon that same fact in order to argue that Christian Science, which offered a means of employment and financial self-support, as a site for female resistance. As Jean McDonald pointed out in 1986, perpetuating the view that the story of Christian Science is entirely about women is fundamentally inaccurate and problematically reproduces the image advanced by misogynist critics like Frederick Peabody, "so close to that of male contemporaries of Eddy and the early Christian Science movement that it may be regarded as little more than a sophisticated restatement of it" (McDonald 102).[50] Though

[50] Similarly problematic, as McDonald points out, is the attempt to construct Mrs. Eddy as an incompletely rebellious female (in which that rebelliousness is treated a positive, transgressive trait and capitulation to

in the minority, men still appeared frequently in the *Journal.* Men were also just as likely to be targeted in anti-Christian Science litigation as women. Of the 47 Christian Science-related trials prosecuted between 1887 and 1990, 30 of them have involved male practitioners either working alone or in conjunction with a female colleague or spouse.[51]

Geographically, these writers are diverse, coming from all parts of the continental U.S., though New England, the Midwest, and Colorado appear most frequently. Socioeconomic and occupational information is difficult to come by, though many authors refer to the performance of physical labor as a sign of their renewed health. This fits with Richard Cabot's argument that Christian Science tended to be most successful in cases of "functional disease" or a disease "due to a perverted action of approximately normal organs" ("One Hundred" 472).[52] Take, for example, the narrative of J.H. Wyman, a Civil War veteran from Buena Vista, Colorado writing in April 1887: [53]

> My spine was injured in 1862, while I was in the Army, and I was discharged for total disability; and since that time I have been under the care of physicians a great deal of the time, and for the last three years I have been completely prostrated, both physically and mentally. On the fourth of this month, having heard of Mrs. Sweet, I went to see her and told her my case, and asked her to treat me. At that time I could not lift a chair, without having to lie down, and remain prostrate, from one to three hours. After one treatment, I walked home, about four blocks away, and felt no desire to lie down. After the second treatment, I cut wood enough to last over the Sabbath; and after the third treatment, I laid aside my cane;

---

social norms is treated as negative) are accepting the basic assumptions of the anti-feminist narratives that come from Eddy's critics. Eddy's critics, after all, painted her as a hysteric, a profit-seeking opportunist, a bad wife and mother, and feminist narratives that valorize this portrait of Eddy as a stubborn and determined interloper in the male-dominated spheres, reify that construction.

[51] For a full statistical breakdown, see Schoepflin, 212-220.

[52] Cabot takes care to clarify, however, that such a definition of functional disease does not imply that it is imaginary: "They are often the source of acute and long-continued suffering; indeed, I believe that there is no class of diseases that gives rise to so much keen suffering; but still they do not seriously damage the organs and tissues of the body" ("One Hundred" 472).

[53] Buena Vista was a mining town that still exists today.

> and on Monday, after my fourth treatment, went into the woods, and cut and hauled a load of wood; and to-day, thanks be to God, and the understanding of Christian Science, I am as well as any man in Buena Vista. Mrs. Sweet is doing great work now, and may the Lord bless her in it. (5.1: 43)

Those who were accustomed to demanding physical labor, both men and women, write in frequently, suggesting that many early Christian Scientists were those who depended on robust health for their physical and economic survival and possibly also those for whom conventional medical treatment—due to geography or economics—was unavailable. In October of 1887, L.B. Porter of Pomfret, Vermont, formerly suffering from "chronic diarrhea for four years" and "rheumatism at times for ten years" cites the ability to perform "a hard summer's work," experiencing "no ill effects from it" as a sign of recovery. So confident was George H. Kinter, a railroad worker, of the popularity of Christian Science among members of his profession, that in his own account, he requested "some pointed testimony regarding healing done for railroad men," which "would likely call forth expressions of interest among a class, whose numbers and influence are generally underestimated. Furthermore, as railroaders are decidedly clannish, though not hurtfully so, it would stimulate work amongst themselves, to become known to each other as Christian Scientists" (5.1: 41).

The October 1887 issue contains the only narrative I have discovered by a person claiming to be a former slave, written by Mrs. Patsy Lewis of Lexington, Kentucky:

> For twenty years before the Civil War I was in that bondage to which my color subjected me; and for nearly all the twenty-two years since the Rebellion I have been a slave to rheumatism in every joint, and with ulceration of the bowels, which would not allow me to stoop without great suffering, and induced intense agony after eating. Having tried every remedy suggested to me and consulted many eminent physicians, I was in the depths of despair, scarcely able to attend to my little, every-day, personal wants, when, one day last December, I heard one of my friends speak of a wonderful cure of a milk-leg, by Dr. and Mrs. Fluno. I went to see the patient myself, and thence to them for treatment. In the language of

> the Queen of Sheba, "the half had not been told me." I was well after four treatments; and now I can joyfully say: "Sickness and sorrow, pain and death, are felt and feared no more." (5.7: 369)

Mrs. Lewis became a student by correspondence and a donor to the building fund for the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston. She also evidently became a practitioner in some fashion, saying "[I] find that I am able to demonstrate this new-old truth" (5.7: 369). While as a former slave, Mrs. Lewis may not be strictly "representative," she attests to the variety of experiences and backgrounds brought to the movement. Note the way in which the body is framed in her letter: "the bondage to which my color subjected me. … I have been a slave to rheumatism" (5.7: 369). The hyper-spiritualism of Christian Science offered freedom from the limitations associated with having the wrong sort of body in nineteenth century society: female, non-white, and/or poor. Because the gender and racial ideology of the nineteenth century positioned the female body and the non-white body as inherently diseased and therefore outside conditions of health prized by the restitution narrative, the metaphysical conception of bodily ailments may have provided a reprieve from the constraints of living in such a body. As Mary Bednarowski suggests:

> It is not difficult to understand the appeal, particularly for women, of a religion which told them, first, that the body with all its limitations was merely an illusion, and second, that spiritual perfection was already theirs. For the Christian Science woman spiritual exercise involved not self-abnegation or lament over perfection not achieved, but cultivation of the understanding of the human person as already perfect. Sin, or error, in Christian Science, was to put too low an estimate on the powers of human spirit. Gender became unimportant if the body was not real. There was no moral or spiritual or physical weakness peculiar to women if the female body, like the male body, was illusory. (Bednarowski 219)

The trope of Christian Science as a force that liberates one from physical conditions of bondage also appears in an unpublished letter to Mrs. Eddy from an inmate named Charles McCard at the Michigan State Prison (original spelling and punctuation preserved):

> When I first came here I did not know any thing about Christian Science. As good luck for me, Mrs. E.C. Heckot, was teaching a C.S. class here in Sunday School, and I found the class. I was very much interested in the truth, I grasped the meaning of this CS religion at once. I of course was some what discouraged feeling the severeness of a life sentence, but as I became more aquainted with this wonderful true religeon, I soon learned it was a reality and that the truth would make me free, I became more reconciled to my surrounding. And I am thankful for the peace of mind that has come to me through this wonderful truth. Its the hight of my ambition to spread this truth all I can, I am not blessed with much of this worlds goods but I have faith in the Lord. And I believe that where he wills it, There will be a way provided so that I can throw off this old yoke of bondage and go forth a free man. (McCard, 11 April 1904)[54]

The most surprising accounts in *The Christian Science Journal* are those of current or former physicians, of which there are a few worth mentioning. October 1887 contains an extract from a letter written to Eddy by a "Harvard graduate, who had practised [sic] medicine fifteen years according to the Old School method, but joined one of Mrs. Eddy's primary classes last Spring" (5.7: 367). He writes:

> It will interest you to know that I had a case of congestion of the base of the brain to treat, of five years' duration. The patient, as well as her friends and physicians, had feared insanity. She was a great sufferer, had been under the care of eminent surgeons and physicians from California to Boston, to whom she had paid out large sums of money. In five days she was healed, and said that she had not felt as well since she was a girl. I saw her on the fourteenth day, for the last time. She was as free as a bird, and *knew* that she was allright [sic]. She is permanently well. (5.7: 367)

In June 1888, another former physician and convert writes of "two cases, showing that Mind, not matter, is the controlling power," both of which seem to be demonstrations of the placebo effect:

> In 1869, just after my graduation from a medical college, I was called to see a lady who thought she was suffering severely. I prescribed for the

[54] McCard also writes that he has no Christian Science literature. A follow-up letter to Joseph Armstrong, a member of Eddy's household acknowledges and thanks Armstrong and Mrs. Eddy for sending him two books and a set of unidentified "papers" (McCard, 2 May 1904).

> case. After a few hours my preceptor was sent for, the messenger saying the old doctor was the one wanted. My preceptor went, prescribed the identical thing I had prescribed, to be used in the same way, and the relief was immediate; medicine had not the least thing to do with it.
>
> On still another occasion I was called to a lady with acute bronchial irritation, with considerable dispnoea, who wanted medicine. To satisfy her mind I gave her a few drops of homeopathic alcohol (the purest form of alcohol) in two-thirds of a glass of water, with orders to be sure and take only one teaspoonful at a time. This was in the evening. After she had retired and put out the light, she thought she would get up and take a swallow from her glass of medicine. Her husband exclaimed "You ought not to have done so! You don't know how much you took and it may kill you!" The lady immediately became desperately sick. She came out all right, after a short time, and her former trouble disappeared. In speaking of it afterward she said: "No one need tell me there is nothing in homeopathic medicine, for I know better." (6.3: 148)

In February 1888, L.T. Ingersoll, M.D. wrote about taking his wife to see a Christian Scientist for constipation and an inflamed uterus:

> Hesitating to treat her myself, and no competent medical aid being available, I persuaded my wife to place herself under the professional care of Mrs. Carpenter,—more, I confess, to gratify curiosity, than with hope of relief. Four treatments relieved the constipation completely. Four months have now elapsed, and daily evacuations occur without effort. The displaced uterus is in its normal situation and free from inflammation. Her general health is as good as ever. I have no knowledge of the agent that produced these effects, but my curiosity has been surprisingly gratified. (5.11: 577)

We should note here that it is Ingersoll who persuades his wife to see the Christian Scientists, which complicates Hansen's argument that men rhetorically shielded themselves from outside criticism by portraying themselves as the ones who required persuading in these situations.

In conclusion, while Christian Science did provide a unique place for women to be healed and to make their voices heard, it also spoke to a broader social need for restitution narratives. Rapid improvements in public sanitation and medical care both

enhanced the availability of physical recovery and instilled a growing desire for it in patients for whom that care was not immediately available. In short, the question historians need to be asking is not simply why Christian Science appealed to women of a particular social status in a particular geographical area but why Christian Science—though initiated and driven by middle class New England women—had such a broad appeal.

MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS AND THE MODERN EXPERIENCE OF ILLNESS

Professional medicine helped create what Arthur Frank calls the modern experience of illness:

> When popular experience is overtaken by technical expertise, including complex organizations of treatment. Folk no longer go to bed and die, cared for by family members and neighbors who have a talent for healing. Folk now go to paid professionals who reinterpret their pains as symptoms, using a specialized language that is unfamiliar and overwhelming. As patients, these folk accumulate entries on medical charts which in most cases they are neither able nor allowed to read; the chart becomes the official story of the illness. (Frank 5)

It would be easy to interpret Christian Science as a return to the pre-modern narrative of domestic, family centered treatment, a model in which "[t]he natural locus of disease is the natural locus of life—the family: gentle, spontaneous care, expressive of love and a common desire for a cure, assists nature in its struggle against the illness itself to attain its own truth" (Foucault, *Birth* 17). Christian Science, while perhaps more domestically and family-centered in some respects, was situated squarely within the norms of clinical practice, born out of the modern desire for expertise, for professionals who reinterpret the individual illness experience according to a specialized language. Yet that specialized language effectively synthesized religion with the authoritative vocabulary of science. As I shall demonstrate later in this chapter, healing narratives often depicted the healing

process as part of a spiritual journey. However, Christian Scientists also based their appeals on the empirical, observable, testable nature of their results, and healers claimed authority over disease on the basis of special training and demonstrated competence. The admonitions cited at the beginning of this chapter show that Eddy believed that qualified, practiced healers were essential to the growth of the movement and the eradication of human suffering. As she wrote to Edward Kimball, one of her top lieutenants in 1903, "I see the need of a healer to be as excluded from other work in Christian Science as for the M.D. Who would look for a successful M.D. who was a lawyer and practicing law or that was a Teacher by profession and practising teaching? A Jack at all trades is good for none is an old adage" (Advice, 3: 67).

From the beginning of her movement-building efforts, Eddy set out to make Christian Science a profession. In fact, physicians and lay observers tended to criticize her for this unacceptable mingling of religious vocation with the dispensation of paid, professional services. Through the Massachusetts Metaphysical College, Eddy created a means for credentialing and thereby granting authority to her students, and through *Science and Health,* she created a specialized language for naming and dealing with illness. Though Christian Science may have been more accessible, more populist, there is a still a call for, in Frank's terms, "narrative surrender" to a professional with special competency, "the central moment in the modernist illness experience" (6). That surrender is both an agreement to submit to particular forms of treatment and to tell a story in the terms defined by the healer. For the patient of a medical doctor, "'How are you?' now requires that personal feeling be contextualized within a secondhand medical report. The physician becomes the spokesperson for the disease, and the ill person's stories come to

depend heavily on repetition of what the physician has said" (6).[55] For the patient of a Christian Scientist, this means adopting the language of *Science and Health* into her illness narrative. For both patient and healer, adopting the diction and tropes of the movement is a pre-requisite for gaining the authority to translate bodily signs into language, to—as Foucault says—render the body transparent and chart a path to wellness.

Christian Scientists saw themselves as professionals in their own right, even though they were deeply engaged in "God's work," and coming over to Christian Science meant trading the M.D.'s specialized language for Eddy's. Despite the movement's antagonistic stance toward the medical profession, the narratives of Scientists are inevitably shaped by medical language, either through the adoption or rejection of that language. Around 1893-94, precise diagnostic language begins dropping out of the *Journal* narratives (it never completely disappears), and is replaced with the Christian Scientist terminology of "beliefs" and "claims." This is most likely a reflection of Mrs. Eddy's ever evolving position on the degree to which Christian Science should acknowledge or even incorporate regular medicine into their practice. At points, she would acknowledge that allowing patients to seek the treatment of doctors or use medicine in conjunction with Christian Science was necessary in order to win people over gradually:

> All are privileged to work out their own salvation according to their light. … If patients fail to experience the healing power of Christian Science, and think they can be benefited by certain ordinary physical methods of medical treatment, then the Mind-physician should give up such cases, and leave invalids free to resort to whatever other systems they fancy will afford relief. (*Science and Health* 443)

[55] In *Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault similarly identifies the transition from "How do you feel?" to "Where does it hurt?"

This statement was enshrined in the by-laws of the Mother Church in 1903: "If a member of this Church has a patient that he does not heal, and whole case he cannot fully diagnose, he may consult with an M.D. on the anatomy involved. Then if he does not heal the patient, and the patient is willing, he shall give up the case" (Advice to Healers 3: 53).

She was, however, insistent that accepting the claims of doctors was counterproductive to a patient or a healer's growth in Christian Science. Indeed, she frequently argued that medical vocabulary in itself had the power to make one sick. In *Science and Health*, Eddy asserts that the very "act of describing disease—its symptoms, locality, and fatality" is "unscientific" (79).[56] Foucault has also pointed to the translations of symptoms (as signs) into the language of diagnosis as the central component of the modern medical epistemology. Quoting Cabanis, he writes in *The Birth of the Clinic*:

> To ask what is the essence of a disease is like "asking what is the nature of the essence of a word." A man coughs; he spits blood; he has difficulty breathing; his pulse is rapid and hard; his temperature is rising; these are all so many immediate impressions, so many letters, as it were. Together, they form a disease, pleurisy. … "Pleurisy" has no more being that the word itself; it "expresses an abstraction of the mind" (119)

For Eddy, the act of even naming a new disease has devastating effects for the mind, producing a culture of trendy hypochondriacs. She likens diseases to fashions, blaming the media for propagating certain trends in ill health: "It does this by giving names to diseases and by printing long descriptions which mirror images of disease distinctly in

---

[56] In "The Importance of a Theory of Signs and a Critique of Language in the Study of Medicine" by F.G. Crookshank, published at a supplement in Ogden and Richard's *The Meaning of Meaning*, the author and physician argues a similar point: "These processes [of attaching names to a set of symptoms] are usually described as the discovery of a new disease, or the elucidation of the true nature of an old one, and when accurately, adequately, and correctly carried out are of very great advantage in practice, rendering available to all the increments in the personal experience of the few. But when, as so often happens, a *name* is illegitimately transferred from the *reference* it symbolizes to particular *referents*, confusion in thought and perhaps in practice is unavoidable" (341).

thought. A new name for an ailment affects people like a Parisian name for a novel garment. Every one hastens to get it" (*Science* 197).[57]

In 1906, she would instruct the editors of her periodicals to "keep out of them all descriptions of shocking suffering and the symptoms of disease" because "rehearsing error is not scientific" (Advice, 3: 101). In place of the specific diagnostic language of medicine, Christian Science developed a vocabulary of its own that acolytes and patients were required to master. "Claim" or "belief" were used to describe physical ailments, which, according to Mrs. Eddy, were illusions caused by the human inability to realize the Truth. Thus, one had a "belief in blindness" or a "claim of tuberculosis," etc. However, through her writings, Mrs. Eddy also developed a highly idiosyncratic way of using relatively familiar words, like science, good, mind, and spirit, a practice that critics would point to as a sign of her illiteracy. Mark Twain, for example, would ridicule the "four self-evident propositions" of *Science and Health* as anything but self-evident:

> 1) God is All-in-all.
> 2) God is good. Good is Mind.
> 3) God, Spirit, being all, nothing is matter.
> 4) Life, God, omnipotent good, deny death, evil, sin, disease.—Disease, sin, evil, death, deny good, omnipotent, God, Life. (*Science and Health* 113)

The language of *Science and Health* was, however, pretty rigorously thought out. As Eddy writes in a letter to Archibald McLellan, one of her publishers:

> In abstract Science, Good, Truth, Spirit, Love, signify God; and these words should be capitalized when you can substitute the word God and convey the proper meaning. Also spirit, truth, good, love, is used correctly as an adjective or common noun in Christian Science. e.g. It is good. The truth is I love you. The spirit of your saying is cruel. The good you do is evil spoken of. When you can substitute the word God, and retain the true

[57] This is, of course, a charge still leveled at current medical practice, particularly in the case of psychiatric illnesses.

> meaning, then Good, Love, Life, Truth, mean God and should be capitalized.
>
> Always avoid if possible using Principle in any other sense than God. Supply instead the words basis, foundation, etc. It is noticeable that this word Principle is used often in a way that confuses the meaning in Science. To use it only as God, is the rule in Science, and thus its meaning is made clear to the learner and the general reader who know little, if anything, of Divine Science. (Eddy, 18 September 1902)

In conclusion, Christian Scientists maintained a professional discourse that was both related to and distinct from medical science. Perhaps the most modern aspect of these narratives, in fact, is a sense of shifting expectations about what any healing method, conventional or sectarian, ought to be able to achieve. Hearkening back to Frank's framing of the difference between the pre-modern and modern models, Scientists, living in a world of rapid innovation and an ever increasing sense of human possibility, clearly would not settle for the "folk go to bed and die" narrative, even when condemned to do so by someone carrying a medical degree. When seeking the expertise of a paid professional, one expects results, and Christian Science, it seems, was providing results for many people. In Frank's words, "Anyone who is sick wants to be healthy again. Moreover, contemporary culture treats health as the normal condition that people ought to have restored. Thus the ill person's own desire for restitution [healing] is compounded by the expectation that other people want to hear restitution stories" (Frank 77). Compelling healing stories is precisely what the *Journal*, and Christian Science as a whole, was in the business of providing.[58]

[58] Frank also likens illness to a mystery and speaks of modernity's desire to "turn mysteries into puzzles, which is both its heroism and its limit," puzzles which necessarily imply the existence of a solution, "the heroism of applied science as self-overcoming" (81, 92).

THE CONTINGENCY OF THE BODY

But how were those results determined and described by those who felt they received them? The central doctrine of Christian Science is a radical privileging of the spiritual sense—often called simply Spirit, Mind, the law of Love, the divine Principle, but also often simply called Science. Accompanying this primacy of spirituality is a wholesale rejection of the material or the physical, which is aligned with sin. According to *Science and Health*, Mind and Matter are antagonistic to one another, "hence both cannot be real" (270). What we perceive through the sense is, in fact, not real, and sin is the act of believing what we perceive through the material sense. Perfection is achieved through a complete adherence to the divine Principle: "The atonement is a hard problem in theology, but its scientific explanation is, that suffering is an error of sinful sense which Truth destroys, and that eventually both sin and suffering will fall at the feet of everlasting Love" (23).

In other words, Christian Science philosophy begins and ends with the denial of the body's reality, the conviction that all matter is illusion, that the only thing real is Mind. Disease or injury, for Christian Scientists, is a manifestation of erroneous beliefs in the body's reality. That said, the Christian Scientists who wrote into the *Journal* spent a great deal of time thinking and writing about their bodies. It is, after all, the body's distress that makes Christian Science resonant and necessary, and it is the body's restoration or relief that grants proof of its efficacy. Illness, according to Frank, forces individuals to cope with the body's contingency, with their inability to predict or control it: "People define themselves in terms of their body's varying capacity for control. So long as these capacities are predictable, control as an action problem does not require self-conscious monitoring. But disease itself is a loss of predictability" (30). Interventions, whether medical or homeopathic or religious, are inevitably always

attempts to restore a sense of control and predictability, to close the gap between how the body is supposed to operate and how it is actually operating. Christian Science attempts to do this by subordinating the body to Mind, by asserting that the realization of the body's unreality enables Mind to take absolute control. Yet Mind's efficacy in doing so always manifests in the body itself. Thus, Christian Science can be viewed as the ultimate expression of the modern desire to subordinate the unpredictable body to the rational mind.

How did Scientists know that they had been healed? This is a much trickier question than one might expect and is precisely why trying to assign a *post facto* explanation of the healing effects of Christian Science is self-defeating. The *Journal* narratives present both sickness and healing in complex ways. Only rarely does one find an account like the following, in which something like a growth or a tumor goes into spontaneous remission:

> I had a tumor on my left eyelid. It was about six years coming, and grew so large that it was very troublesome. I knew by experience that Christian Science could heal, for I had been healed of severe hip and kidney trouble, rheumatism, and catarrh. The tumor was not destroyed as the other claims were. My son said it must be cut out. I held on to the Truth and with the help of a student of Christian Science it also has been destroyed. (11.5: 232)

Most Scientists wrote about their diagnoses and healings in less quantifiable terms. They knew they were healed not because a specific pathogen disappeared from their bloodstream or because a cancerous lesion suddenly vanished. Even in the few cases like the one above, there remains an element of uncertainty. Like the previous writer, Mrs. H.A. Carpenter of Ohiowa, Nebraska, says, there was something different about her tumor. Far more frequently, Scientists talked about the ways in which they *experienced*

their bodies, what their formerly sick or ultimately well bodies enabled them to do and how they liberated or constrained their lives.

We have seen examples of this already. As with the Civil War veteran who defined health in terms of his ability to chop and carry wood and the farmer's wife who saw evidence of her healing in her capacity for doing housework cheerfully and tirelessly, many Christian Scientists described both illness and health in terms of the body's capabilities and functions.[59] Though the vast majority of these healing narratives allude to the functional capacities of the body, perhaps no other says it quite as well as H.D. Janes does in the April 1893 issue. Janes, a Colorado blacksmith, does not name a specific physical complaint, which is unusual, but speaks of a sense of both spiritual and physical renewal:

> Thank God for a book that teaches such wonderful spiritual truths, and through its teaching I am able to work out my own salvation, as hundreds of others are doing. By declaring that God is ever-present, and all-power, I have seen myself made a new man,—fear entirely gone,—and the body brought under the influence of divine Principle, performs its duty without pain or trouble. (9.1: 39)

Janes's narrative is interesting for the way in which it turns surrender to the Divine into a mode of agency. Though he invokes God's power, that power ultimately endows him with restored sense of control over both the body and the spirit, in which the ability to compel the body to perform its duty is linked to the ability to work out one's own salvation.

Bodily autonomy and the ability to make the body do what it is supposed to do must have been a matter of survival for some of these early converts as much as it was a matter of personal fulfillment. P.B. of Amsterdam, New York wrote in September 1891:

---

[59] This trope is, of course, hardly unique to Christian Science. To name just one contemporary example, television commercials for asthma medication use images of individuals walking, running, or chasing after kids to signify "restored function."

> On the 10th of July 1871 I fell from a tree, about ten feet, striking my spine on chips of wood with such force as to completely paralyze my lower limbs, having no use of them for weeks. The doctors blistered me thoroughly and used various other means up to two years ago. … Have labored some every year till three years ago. From that time I could not labor until healed through Science, which was brought to my notice about April 1st 1890. Commenced attending meetings, taking treatment, and studying about April 15th 1890, and on September 25th following, commenced laboring, and have not lost any time since on account of ill health. (9.6: 260)

Not losing time at work is a consistent concern among working and middle class Christian Scientists, who depended upon daily labor in order to make ends meet. A salesman from New York writes similarly in February 1889:

> I came home from a business trip in January all broken up, with scarcely any appetite, a very bad cough, and with hardly any strength to walk; when I left the office I left word that I had gone home sick and would not be back until I was better. Then I started to have a Scientist in Brooklyn treat me for my troubles. While crossing the bridge on my way back I realized that I was feeling much better and stronger, and when I arrived in New York, instead of going home sick, I finished my day's work (calling on several customers) and have not lost one hour's work on account of sickness since. (6.11: 40).

The tale of J.P. Davis of Quindaro, Kansas, who was homeless prior to his healing is also particularly compelling: "Last spring I tramped this section six weeks, without work or money, and had no friends. During this time I lay out of doors much of the time; no money, no home. Now I am running the store at this place from garret to cellar,—safe, money, post-office all. What has brought this change in my temporal condition? Christian Science has done it all; but I must not get proud" (11.5: 230). Davis's story is interesting because, unlike most *Journal* narratives, he never names a specific diagnosis (the narrative is an excerpt from a letter to his healer, however, so it is possible that such details were deemed unnecessary). Rather, the condition of vagrancy, joblessness, and

friendlessness define the illness experience, and the attainment of a job and a sense of responsibility (note the writer's pride in his new managerial status) the sign of remission.

The remission of pain is also consistently invoked as a sign of healing, sometimes even when the physical condition that ought to be causing the pain remains objectively visible. However, accounts of pain remission frequently come second-hand and may express a desire or expectation that pain be removed in contradiction of physical evidence. Consider Mrs. Lizzie Freling's rather graphic account of the relief her son received after suffering third degree burns in an accident:

> On arriving home the Scientist, knowing my husband was not a Scientist, asked me if I wanted a doctor. I said to my son "Do you want a doctor?" A very emphatic no, was the reply, so the case was given to Science, and in about two hours he said the pain was all gone.
>
> The case seemed critical to sense, as he was badly burned and had in all probability inhaled the fire, which by doctors is pronounced fatal.
>
> His face, hands, and wrists were badly burned. There was not a spot on his face as large as a pea that was not burned through the flesh, while the back of one hand was completely torn off, leaving the muscles exposed. His lips were so badly burned, and the inside of his mouth and nostrils, that he could not take food that required chewing, or breath through his nose. He did not suffer a particle from the time he said the pain was gone. (13.6: 256)

While the writer could not possibly have known whether her son's pain had completely disappeared, the case remains intriguing precisely because sensation is privileged over other evidence displayed on the body. Some Christian Scientists did, however, report conquering pain through the power of mind. For example, Mary Jones wrote to Mrs. Eddy in 1910 describing a situation in which she used Christian Science to will the body to submit:

> I burned two finger ends severely in boiling syrup, and, to mortal sense, the pain was intense. But instantly there flashed through my consciousness:—"You have your work to do—<u>do it!</u>" The only thing I

> could grasp, mentally, was the sentence:—"There is no sensation in matter," Science and Health, page 237-line 4. This I said over twice, the pain still manifesting itself. But as I reached the word "sensation" for the third time, error seem to have tried its utmost, and failed! For it was as though Something drew the pain out, just in proportion as it had come, and just after I finished the words "in matter," I was conscious that I was healed. The pain had wrung the tears from my eyes, but now I cried for joy—and I was so humbled that I went to my knees in a prayer of thanksgiving. I knew I was completely healed, but I could not look at my fingers immediately, for I felt it would be tempting God, by wishing to prove to mortal eyesight, God's perfect love for me. I washed and dried my hands, and then, however, went to the window and examined the fingers, and found them perfectly normal. They were not even red, much less inflamed or blistered. (Jones, 22 January 1910)

Severe injury (such as broken bones) and childbirth were absorbed into Christian Science discourse in unique ways, as the visible evidence of injury and parturition presented an empirical problem. Eddy herself counseled the inclusion of doctors or aspects of medical treatment into such cases, and she consulted an obstetrician in Boston while developing her own courses on obstetrics and childbirth.[60] As with Freling's son,

---

[60] Eddy gives the following instructions to Alfred Baker, who came to Boston to teach obstetrics to Christian Scientists in 1898:

> Do not turn to your past knowledge of obstetrics wholly for your present need as the teacher of metaphysical obstetrics but only look into your old books if need be to refresh your memory as to the simple physical rules to be applied by the accoucheur.
>
> During parturition your mind can assist your patient or the prospective mother. At the birth let your mind govern the action prevent pain and control the presentation of the babe. Mind is master of all the rules and conditions pertaining to obstetrics. Mind governs the results in every respect contingent on delivery and the condition of the infant and mother and the treatment thereof. But if you in certain cases cannot demonstrate this then you can resort to instruments but only as Jesus was baptised saying "suffer it to be so now".
>
> Teach your student all this and teach him apart from this the purely mechanical parts of obstetrics. Do not drill him in unnecessary detail therein but qualify him according to law how to proceed in all cases and under difficult circumstances. Qualify him first how to conduct safe and harmonious cases of childbirth then how to treat the abnormal cases.
>
> Advise your students in case of serious obstacles at childbirth that they do not overcome to summons an M.D. for counsel in order to avoid our state laws coming down on them. And guard well mentally the mother's thought so as to prevent fear or inflammation. (Advice to Healers 72)

the sign of the Scientist's efficacy was an absence of pain or complications. The September 1887 issue appears about the time when the first class in obstetrics at Massachusetts Metaphysical College would have been completed. The student E.D. Greene reports the following:

> My first case in the obstetric line came along last week. I was not able to carry the belief entirely painless, but nearly so. The patient sat up next day, and walked around the room. People think this is a wonderful result; but how little they realize the possibilities in Christian Science. The nurse says she never, in her life, saw anything like this rapid recovery. (5.6: 310)

In May of 1898, L.A. Vincent of Salt Lake City, Utah—who had previously been healed of heart disease—reported giving birth with no assistance and no pain as a proof of the efficacy of Christian Science: "Last May a baby boy came to our home, and as there was not time to send for a Scientist—my husband and I being alone—he realized the Truth for me. I had no pain whatsoever. … When the Scientist came fifteen minutes later she pronounced to work perfectly done. I never experienced such a happy, peaceful season, as I did the days following" (16.2: 132).

In other cases, Christian Science assists in the healing process even if that process is at least partially overseen by doctors. One remarkable unpublished letter in January 1906 from Charlotte Morath tells the story of a Miss K., who was horribly injured in an industrial accident:

> While superintending some work, her hair caught in the band of an electric machine, used to turn an ice cream freezer. In an instant, her entire scalp was torn off, from the back of her neck, to below her eyebrows and the upper part of one ear. Immediately, several physicians were summoned, she was conveyed to her home, and the scalp was stitched into place by a surgeon. (Morath, 9 January 1906)

Miss K. had a sister, however, who was healed of "an internal, cancerous tumor, when the knife was considered the last and only resort" (Morath, 9 January 1906). The local

doctor had "recognized and rejoiced in her healing by C.S." but meeting Morath on the street, "told me there was not the slightest hope for her [Miss K.] in material medica, and that he had hoped that she would turn to C.S. as that was the only thing which could save her life" (Morath, 9 January 1906). The letter, which is several handwritten pages long, describes in gruesome detail the process by which Miss K. was transported to a Kansas City hospital—her reattached scalp pronounced necrotic—and how the doctors made failed attempts at skin grafts. All this time, the patient remained in horrible pain and was not given any drugs. At a point of extreme crisis, the Christian Scientist was called to the patient's side, and the effects of metaphysical treatments were freedom from pain and a swift recovery from an injury that had been pronounced fatal:

> He [the doctor] must have heard some rumor, for it was whispered around that C.S. had been resorted to, for else she could not have survived the accident. Much of the skin grafting which was done before C.S. treatments were given, failed to adhere, but when done over again, the Truth in Science and Health, page 124-20, "Adhesion, cohesion, and attraction are properties of the mind," was realized, and the work was beautiful, for it healed "without seam or rent." The physician pronounced it the "prettiest" piece of work of the kind he had ever seen. Last Saturday, I again visited the patient, who has for weeks been entirely from under the care of nurse and physician and having only C.S. help, and I learned that new hair, is coming on the new skin. The words from Science and Health, page 81-21, "Erase the figures which express number, silence the tones of music, give to the worms the body called man, and yet the producing, governing diving Principle lives on," were constantly in my thought. While the demonstration is not yet complete, the improvement is going on more rapidly since the patient's well enough to enable her to read Science and Health every day. (Morath, 9 January 1906)

Narratives like these demonstrate that Christian Scientists did not always expect the miraculous. In this particular case, small signs of aid—the reduction in pain, the success of later skin grafts—are taken as proof of the method's efficacy.

Once again, the actuality of these healing events is less important than how the writers describe them. Consistent with the model of the restitution narrative, these

accounts express a desire for and an expectation of a healthy body that performs ideally. As Frank indicates, restitution narratives normalize the healthy body, here imagined as the body that "performs its duty" without fatigue or complaint, the body that feels no pain despite evidence of injury. In *The Wounded Storyteller*, Frank critiques Talcott Parsons' theory of "the sick role," role being defined as "behavior the sick person expects from others and what they expect from him" (81). Namely, the expectation of both the sick person and the institutional discourse that surrounds him is restitution, eventual wellness. Thus, both the sick role and Christian Science contain "a powerful narrative of what medicine *expects from* the ill person and what other social institutions expect from medicine. At the core of those expectations is the assumption of restitution: returning the sick person to the status quo ante" (Frank 84).

HEALING AS PROCESS AND SPIRITUAL STRUGGLE

Committed as they are to this expectation and normalization of health, both the sick role model and Christian Science must find ways to explain conditions that fail to respond to treatment, bodies that do not automatically perform their duty. Mrs. Eddy dealt with chronic illness and relapse by simply foreclosing the possibility. As she wrote to a follower named Charlotte Allan:

> No disease can relapse, no fear return Truth, Life, Love, is the same forever a reversal of them is impossible. The old beliefs of fear, sin, or disease cannot return, they never were; and there are no new beliefs of these, or fear of them to come, for there are none in for doing good, our life consists of good, our health and happiness all come from thinking rightly, and acting rightly. The law is that we are healthier and happier for helping or healing others, it is only thus that we fulfil [sic] the law of Christ. (Advice, 3: 43)

Occasionally, Christian Scientists were frank about the incompleteness of their recovery and incorporated relapses into narratives of spiritual growth. Consider, for example, the

narrative of E.S. in March 1892: "For eight long years I searched for health, and found it not. Each and every physician told me the same story, viz: that I was diseased in every organ, and when free from pain ought to be satisfied, for I could never be strong; but none of them could even free me from the pain. Useless and miserable, I often wondered why God afflicted me so" (9.12: 512). E.S. was eventually treated by a Scientist and "returned home, cured of my worst troubles, and able to walk as well as anyone. My friends all made fun of me, and said it was excitement that was keeping me up; that in a short time I would be as bad as ever,—but thank God, their prophecy has not been fulfilled" (9.12: 512). Once again, the writer speaks of illness and health in terms of physical capacity, namely, the ability to walk "as well as anyone" and insists upon an elevated level of functioning subsequent to the healing experience. Yet the writer admits to occasional relapses in seeming contradiction to the claim about friends' "prophecies":

> Every old disease and pain came back to me that summer and fall, and many times I was tempted to give it all up and go back to medicine; but I did not yield. I knew that in some indescribable way God was caring for me, and so kept steadily on. ... The temptations of sickness appear at times, but I am always sure of one fact: that these claims cannot stay long, and must finally disappear forever. Never, from the first I ever heard of it, have I doubted the truth of Christian Science. (9.12: 512)

The use of the language of temptation and spiritual struggle to describe relapses into ill health shows up frequently. In April of 1893, Lillie von Aldehoff of Dallas, Texas writes of being cured from "a dream of invalidism," manifesting as an inability to walk short distances and chronic pain:

> Reading *Science and Health* for hours alone, and with my Scientist's treatment, the realization of God as my strength came clearer, and I stood upon my feet, resisting the temptation to lean upon aught but God.
>
> It was not easy to stand or walk, it was not easy to deny the seeming reality of pain in every part of my body, so do not be discouraged or dismayed if error tempts you to give up. Hold fast to Love, and Love will

> uphold you as it has me. On the fourth or fifth day I dressed myself, took *Science and Health* under my arm and walked down stairs—walked—but so inharmoniously it called forth a smile of amusement as well as pleasure.
>
> As the days passed I grew in strength until on the tenth day I began a twenty-four hours' journey to——where I spent three happy months. This trip necessitated my walking a long block from one train to another, and error tempted me to take a wheel chair, for every step seemed painful. Truth conquered.
>
> Upon my return home I could easily walk a mile. Now I walk miles easily, sew on the sewing machine, run up and down stairs. Though I yet have only a faint perception of omnipotent love, I am happy and well. (11.1: 29-30)

Both narratives describe healing as a process rather than an instantaneous moment of restoration. As the *Journal* began to devote more space and to allow for longer healing narratives in the 1890's, process becomes a more consistent theme, but even the earlier, more perfunctory accounts often allude to a number of weeks or months of treatment or a number of sessions with the healer before true relief began to manifest.

As P.B., the laborer cured of lower limb paralysis states, "[I] have not yet regained normal strength because I yet realize only a limited amount of Truth. But the Truth I have and do realize has brought me a wonderful amount of enjoyment and comfort. I expect to go on learning and realizing Truth, and growing spiritually stronger, and the spiritual strength will bring out more harmony in all directions" (9.6: 260). Indeed, many *Journal* authors confess to being slow-learners and obstinate doubters when it comes to Christian Science. In August 1893, Mary A. Shearer of Geneseo, IL writes:

> She [the healer] treated me for several weeks and I was healed, but as my home was far from there and no Scientist near the old troubles came back; then I took medicine, but finally had to go to a Scientist again. I never responded to treatment as quickly as many do, so I often became discouraged, and indeed, sometimes wished I had never heard of Christian

> Science. I had much to discourage me, for I attended lectures with two different teachers (both having been highly recommended to me), who were Christian Scientists in name only. One had been Mrs. Eddy's student, but had drifted away from her teaching to a line of thought of his own. I was unable to demonstrate over the false claims that were constantly coming up. However, I had learned that after once starting there was no real going back. I must press on, and in the past few months I have had such marvelous demonstrations that I am overwhelmed with the thought of what Truth will do when we understand and are faithful. (11.5: 229)

This is consistent with the Christian Science teaching that humans understand Divine Principle imperfectly and thus have imperfect control over matter. Christian Science accommodates the chronicity of certain illnesses by depicting healing as an open-ended process of spiritual development for which the individual sufferer is responsible. In other words, it is the patient, not the method, who has to shift and change approach. Eddy makes a clear distinction between blind faith and what she terms, "spiritual understanding," which is "the evidence gained from Spirit, which rebukes sin of every kind and establishes the claims of God" (*Science* 23). In October 1891, a Scientist wrote to the *Journal* of an uncle who did not immediately respond to treatment because of this distinction: "I found he had accepted it in blind faith, and was calling it 'Faith Cure.' I asked him why he did not call the healing Christian Science? He said 'Is it not the same thing?' After, or during, the class his sight returned so that he could write his name quite nicely" (9.7: 1891). An understanding of Science, achieved through close readings of scripture, introduces an active element to the process of salvation, one which enables the believer to transcend the material world. The culmination of that process of perfection was achieved with Christ, who did no more than reveal the absolute power of Spirit over matter that already existed among men through the miracle of his resurrection. Eddy allows the Virgin Mary a similar power: "The illumination of Mary's spiritual sense put to silence material law and its order of generation, and brought forth her child by the revelation of Truth" (*Science* 29). Interestingly, sexual reproduction and marriage are

presented as necessary evils in a society that hasn't attained spiritual perfection (*Science* 56). Continually referring to the "advanced thinker" or the "educated belief," Eddy identifies a kind of spiritual/intellectual elite, which consists of those who most clearly understand the "absolute science" and thus hold power over the material world (*Science* 39-41).[61]

There are two different ways to look at the consequences of framing the quest for understanding and health as an individual responsibility. On the one hand, Eddy and her followers seemed to be trying to reclaim a sense of agency in reaction to the disquieting effects of the body's contingency. In *Science and Health*, the process of empowering the patient as an agent with control over his or her own bodily responses is presented as a central part of the healer's role: "At the right time explain to the sick the power which their beliefs exercise over their bodies. Give them divine and wholesome understanding, with which to combat their erroneous sense, and so efface the images of sickness from mortal mind" (*Science* 396). Indeed, fear of coercion informs the Christian Scientist opposition to modern medicine, at least in part. Eddy cites the case of a woman who was "compelled by her physicians" to take ether for an operation and died: "Her hands were held, and she was forced into submission. The case was brought to trial. The evidence was found to be conclusive, and verdict was returned that death was occasioned, not by the ether, but by fear of inhaling it" (*Science* 159).[62] One thing that Christian Science does demand is that its practitioners treat every patient as a mind, that is, as a subject rather than as "so much mindless matter, and as if matter were the only factor to be

[61] What Eddy appears to be evolving here is a scientific theory of what we might call miracles (though acts of healing commonly called miracles are natural events for Eddy), though one that does not rely on the principles of material science with which we are familiar.

[62] Anxiety concerning operations often comes up in the *Journal* accounts, where a patient decides to seek out a Christian Scientist when surgery is deemed the only remaining option.

consulted" (*Science* 159). Even the hypnotist "dispossesses the patient of his individuality in order to control him. No person is benefited by yielding his mentality to any mental despotism or malpractice" (*Science* 375). Insofar as Christian Science subordinates the body to the mind, so it protects both from the violent intrusions, humiliations, and dismissals of modern medicine.

Yet there is an inescapable victim blaming aspect to this insistence that failures are always due to the insufficient faith of the patient, not a problem with the method. In his history of psychoanalysis in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Philip Cushman looks at Christian Science in the context of its intellectual predecessors, namely mind cure and mesmerism: "Mesmerism responded to the emotional suffering caused by economic oppression, political upheavals, and cultural confusion of its era by entirely *ignoring* the socio-political realm. Mesmerism explained the suffering of members of the middle class by blaming it on the victim, specifically on the internal functions of the mind" (128). The same can be said of Christian Science, which perpetuated this focus on what Cushman calls "apolitical interiority," the continual quest for individual perfection at the price of other forms of social and political engagement.

Furthermore, it is clear that the responsibility for working out one's own spiritual salvation and physical restitution contributed to a sense of profound despair among chronic sufferers. Followers would often write to Mrs. Eddy about their illnesses and their failures to "demonstrate" over disease, but they also wrote of their sincere belief that she herself could heal them, even at a distance, because they believed her understanding of Science to be perfect.[63] In October of 1998, Mrs. Jennie Mackenzie wrote,

[63] Such a belief in her expertise was, of course, refracted through religious faith. The unpublished letters contain numerous references to "touching the hem" of Mrs. Eddy's gown, an allusion to the New Testament account of the man who was healed by touching the hem of Christ's robe, after which Christ informed him that it was his faith that healed him. One letter writer declares that, "I shall not ask you to cure me; for if I only see you, I shall be cured. In the name of humanity allow me this privilege" (Kilpatrick 18 July 1910).

> I can only compare myself to a child groping in the dark, seeking light. I've had ill health for a long time and now I am reading science and health. But the harder I try to live above self and the more I read and try to understand the more my head will ache and it seems as if I hadn't a bit of strength left.
>
> I love the book very much and it helps me to understand the bible better, which I also love very much, and I love my dear blessed God with all my heart. Now I say what is this in my way that keeps me from understanding this wonderful cure. I appeal to you to help me, to prevail for I am very anxious to learn to live a higher and holier life. Perhaps you won't like to be troubled but if it is what it seems to be I know you will be to willing to do this for me, if I am healed I am ready to launch out and do everything you say, all for Jesus, oh bless his holy name. (Mackenzie, 13 October 1998)

Likewise, Mrs. J.E. Morgan writes in August of 1910, just a few months from Eddy's own death,

> Can't you, and won't you help me, I've been interested in C.S. for, a long, time, and studied it in my own interest. I am totally deaf—the auditory nerve said to be paralyzed. I have tried so hard to understand C.S. I have S&H with key to scripture, I wish you would please help me, I feel as if one word from you would make me whole.
>
> Although I note in your S&H you decline medical consultation yet I pray that you will help me for Ive been deaf so long 10 years and been so anxious to hear it seems, as if I were shut up in a dungeon, and have no pleasure in life meanwhile I shall continue to study C.S. and try to grasp the truth, there in myself, please help me. (Morgan, 20 August 1910)

In 1885, Mrs. Eddy, then in her seventies, stopped accepting patients of her own. In 1889, she stopped teaching and began her steady withdrawal from active public life. Increasing demands on her time and energy ultimately led her to instruct her secretaries not to show her these letters of entreaty, which frequently also included requests for money or other forms of material assistance.[64] Some of these letters are archived along with the form

[64] I came across one exchange between Mrs. Eddy's secretary and Katherine Wells Reddington, the daughter of the late John B. Wells, the U.S. Senator from New Hampshire. Reddington, a widow, writes that "You have been such a noble Christian all through your life I feel that I can go to you confidentially

response informing the writer that Mrs. Eddy no longer takes patients. Many letters acknowledge that fact, but plead for her to make an exception in their case. So numerous are these letters and so excruciating are their entreaties in their intimacy and naked desperation that her choice to simply have her staff handle them—which was sometimes attributed to callousness by Eddy's critics—becomes somewhat understandable.[65] In February of 1900, Julia O'Dell writes,

> Pardon me for the liberty I take in writing you. My reason is that I have great faith in you and Christian Science Healing, and am sick and want to be healed. I have been reading Healing Currents from The Battery of Life, for a short time, but have received no help yet and think perhaps you will give me some advice or refer me to some one who will help me. I have a family depending upon me to keep up the home and I have got so weak and emaciated that I will have to give up soon unless I get help. I think my sickness and failing health is caused by a fistula which I noticed 10 years ago, and I have let it take its course owing to the fact that I had no means to go to a doctor and too proud to become a charity patient. I was to take up C.S. and hope I may regain my health for I want to stay with my children a few years yet. If God in his mercy sees fit to leave me with them. (O'Dell, 10 February 1900)

Some desperate followers attributed to Mrs. Eddy powers that she never even claimed for herself.[66] Though Eddy believed that Christian Science would ultimately conquer death,

---

and tell you of some private matters" and proceeds to tell Mrs. Eddy of her financial troubles and to request her assistance (Reddington, 18 August 1904). Upon receiving the usual reply from the Corresponding Secretary that Mrs. Eddy is flooded with requests for loans and monetary gifts, Reddington wrote, "I do not think you, or anyone else, have any right reading 'Personal' and Private letters—the letter which I now have reference to, was intended for Mrs. Eddy and I do not thank you for the liberty which you have taken regarding it … If one need a grain of Kindness keep away from Church people with their marble hearts!! This, I will do, hereafter, and more over, I will never enter a Church, called "Christian Science" as long as I live!!" (Reddington, n.d.).

[65] One unpublished letter from 1904 rants for pages and pages about Mrs. Eddy's failure to respond to her pleas: "I wrote you several weeks ago in regard to my condition. You made no answer, and I hold you responsible in the sight of God for your lack of aid in the deepest trouble that ever befell a human being. 'Where much is given much is required and 'Where is thy brother?' is not a sentence without meaning" (Hollaman, 24 May 1904).

[66] These letters, particularly the later ones, are emotionally exhausting to read even as a researcher. Frankly, I now feel an abiding sympathy for whoever reads the Pope's mail. Even some of the positive ones from individuals who had no contact with the head of their Church, address Mrs. Eddy in terms that are

she had no illusions about doing so in her own lifetime.[67] And yet, some followers wrote to her begging her to resurrect their dead loved ones, as did Jessie Omohunder:

> I have recently lost my darling baby, and reading your book believe if I could understand and know more of God my baby could be raised—Believing you to be the most spiritual person living, and if such a thing can be done you have the faith and knowledge of God to do it, I beg of you to try it.
>
> I have faith enough, if I only understand, that this separation could be returned.
>
> I feel my little daughter is near me and must come back. (Omohunder, 1 February 1910)

Unsurprisingly, such testimonies were never printed in *The Christian Science Journal.* Like all restitution narratives, Christian Science, which privileged the power of

---

uncomfortably intimate and occasionally hint at psychological instability. In 1905, one admirer writes with a proposal of marriage for the eighty-four year old. Upon receiving no response, he writes again, "The problem of matrimony is before us, and it seems urgent that it be solved, wherefore in plain words, I ask you, are you willing to become my lawful wife, before God and Man. It is your Spirituality I am seeking, not materiality … if you are willing, we will meet and marry in Chicago, Ill. And make a new start in the world . . . am alone in the world, and have no one to gather earthly goods for, restore my rights, and I will sign them all over to you, all I ask is my daily needs, instruction in Righteousness, in supreme Wisdom, in Christian Science" (Johnson, 27 June 1905). Today, we might call this stalking. This is not to say that all Christian Scientists were insane or fanatical. Merely that like any celebrity—particularly religious celebrities—Mrs. Eddy attracted her fair share of the broken. Whereas many Christian Scientists found in Eddy's teachings a means to self-empowerment, others saw Mrs. Eddy as a repository for all of their hopes, fears, and disappointments or as their last possible refuge in the storm. The enormous expectations that are reflected in these letters throws the vitriol of disaffected members of the Church into stark relief. While one should reserve some portion of responsibility for the disappointed hopes of these individuals for Mrs. Eddy herself, it seems clear that her followers saw her as superhuman in a way that went far beyond Eddy's claims about herself. In addition to a teacher and leader, they quite literally saw her as the incarnation of divinity, omnipotent. The disillusionment they must have felt when she proved to be human must have been shattering.

[67] Though some of her followers believed that she would ultimately either live forever or be resurrected, like Christ, in a "final demonstration" over death. This was not a belief that Eddy herself encouraged. As Gill states, "There is overwhelming evidence that certain individuals and groups in the movement liked to give Mrs. Eddy an exalted religious role—Ira Knapp and his son Bliss, for example, identified her as the woman crowned with stars named in Revelation. The evidence is equally strong, however, that Mary Baker Eddy herself was quick to see and to censure any attempt to make her or any of her works into what she like to call a Dagon, a false image" (413). Her letters show her repeatedly chastising Augusta Stetson, one of her most monomaniacal followers, for placing her (Mrs. Eddy) on the same level as Christ. Stetson was, of course, eventually purged from the ranks.

the rational mind, was incapable of assimilating the chaos of chronic suffering or death. In the restitution narrative, as Frank says, death is unnarratable: "The first limitation of restitution stories is the obvious but often neglected limitation of the modernist deconstruction of mortality: when it doesn't work any longer, there is no other story to fall back on. Restitution stories no longer work when the person is dying or when impairment will remain chronic. When restitution does not happen, other stories have to be prepared or the narrative wreckage will be real" (94). Barbara Ehrenreich testifies to the fundamental problem with the restitution narrative in her own account of dealing with breast cancer in *Bright-Sided*, visiting various online support forums and getting caught up in (or being assailed by) "pink ribbon culture." In cancer support groups, the name "survivor" is worn like a badge of honor, but

> For those who cease to be survivors and join the more than forty thousand American women who succumb to breast cancer each year—again, no noun applied. They are said to have "lost their battle" and may be memorialized by photographs carried at races for the cure. … But in the overwhelmingly positive culture that has grown up around breast cancer, martyrs count for little; it is the survivors who merit constant honor and acclaim. (27)

Worse than this inability to acknowledge the dead except by euphemism is the way in which terminal patients are often ostracized from support groups and even blamed for their own inability to get well. This need for restitution prompts cancer patients, like Christian Scientists, to create internally consistent narratives, transforming "breast cancer into a rite of passage—not an injustice or a tragedy to rail against but a normal marker in the life cycle, like menopause or grandmotherhood" (29). As such, there is no room for anger or fear, which Ehrenreich suggests would be normal emotions, only a relentless pressure to get oneself well, not only for yourself, but for the community of patients.

TREATMENT OF MINORS AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS

Jessie Omohunder's belief that her child could be resurrected if her own "understanding" of Christian Science were strong enough was not unique. If bearing the responsibility for one's own physical health and eternal salvation were not enough, Christian Scientists were also responsible for the well-being of those in their immediate care. Like most believers in mental healing after Mesmer, Scientists believed that minds could transmit positive or negative beliefs to one another and that children—owing to their cognitive underdevelopment—were particularly vulnerable. Thus, they adapted a kind of "vengeful God" model to their unique purposes by making childhood illnesses a function of both the child's erroneous beliefs *and* the parents'.

Occasionally, Christian Scientists would depict children as miniature adults, fully endowed with the ability to understand Divine Principle. Consider the narrative written in January 1897 by Ellender M. Wonderly of Delena, Oregon about her child:

> Our ten-year-old daughter got her thumb caught in a feed cutter between two cogs; the flesh was cut and torn on the inner side, then cut again. I replaced it as best I could and bound it up. I then asked her if she wished me to call my father, who is a physician and surgeon, and have it sewed up, and see if the bone was all right. She commenced crying and said, "No, no, I only want Christian Science." Her brother came in and we three repeated the Lord's Prayer over and over again, I repeating the spiritual interpretation. She repeated her little prayer, the Mother's New Year gift to the little ones.
>
> I took her on my lap and read Science and Health to her, then we repeated the Scientific Statement of Being, sang hymns 161 and 178 from the Hymnal, and read the 91st Psalm. She then went to bed. There was no pain or inflammation. The nail came off but it took only a short time for it to heal, and nothing was applied as a remedy, her thumb was only bound up. (14.10: 513-14)

Perhaps in an effort to shield herself from criticism (or prosecution), this mother frames the choice to consult Christian Science alone as solely the child's, the parent having given her the option to have the thumb repaired surgically. She also portrays the child as

playing an active role in the healing ritual, reading and reciting the relevant passages along with her mother. Indeed, we must be at least somewhat willing to look at the children of Christian Science as agents with their own spiritual lives, however much their particular belief may have been influenced by the adults in their lives. The "Reminiscence File" at the Mary Baker Eddy Library contains numerous accounts of the leader's life written from the perspective of children. Likewise, children wrote to Mrs. Eddy, though we will never know to what degree these testimonies were influenced by parents. Gladys Kilton writes,

> I am a little girl eleven years old, and I have hearttroble [sic] but am a great deal better. I go to the Christian Science Sunday school and I like it very much.
>
> I had five dollars and I wanted to give it to my practitioner and he told me to buy me a Science and Health and so I did, which mamma and I think so much of and read every day, and that same night we went down town and had my five dollars given back to me. I think it is nice to talk about Truth and Love.
>
> Your little Christian Science girl. (Kilton, 28 May 1910)

Children were occasionally shown to be capable of healing themselves and other children. Josephine Woodbury recounts a case in 1885 in which her own nine-year-old daughter healed a younger neighbor child of a fever: "It was a pitiful sight, but nothing daunted, the youthful healer sat down by the bedside perfectly still, and remained so for nearly fifteen minutes, and the frightened mother realized there was a change in the boy. His eyes ceased rolling, every symptom of pain left him, and in less time than it takes to tell, he was peacefully sleeping. No further symptoms of distress appeared" (41). Likewise, a thirteen-year old girl wrote to Mrs. Eddy describing how she healed her younger cousin of a spine problem that required a brace:

> While in Buffalo last April, I came into the Truth. So I realized that Helen was God's image and likeness.
>
> I live in New York City, and Helen wrote to me about one month ago and told me she was improving. Every day I demonstrated for her, and she wrote me quite a few letters telling me she was getting so much better.
>
> Last Monday she and her mother came up to New York to go to the doctor's and he pronounced her well. (King, 29 June 1899)

Yet other *Journal* accounts concerning sick children are saturated with the intense and irresolvable anxiety of adults simply trying to do what is best for their offspring, trying to determine the best course of treatment based on mixed experiences with both traditional and non-traditional forms of care. John Ellis of Lynn, MA, whose adult daughter died under the exclusive care of doctors, wrote this harrowing tale in 1893:

> About nine years ago our daughter passed on; just before her earth life closed, she asked to have a Christian Science healer; it was the first time our attention had been called to the subject (supposing it was some 'ism'). We were told that before the healer would take the case we must discharge the M.D.s, which, with our understanding, we could not do; consequently, we are left to mourn the loss of our daughter" (11.7: 326).

Ellis is explicit about his sense of regret in obviating his daughter's therapeutic choice, convinced that his unwillingness to allow a Christian Scientist free reign in the case resulted in her death. This harrowing experience naturally shapes his decision making process later on when his infant granddaughter becomes ill:

> I have a granddaughter who was nine months old in August, 1891, having been sickly from her birth. Her father at this time put her under the care of the best medical treatment; the doctor called the disease indigestion; he consulted the best writings known to medical science and prescribed food that was decided by the best medical authorities to be the nearest to mother's milk. The child grew worse all the time. She slept but little and what little food she took caused severe suffering. It was decided she could live but a few hours. As a last resort it was determined to turn to Christian Science; a healer from Boston was called, who ordered clear milk and any other food that the child could take, which never distressed her in the least; she began to recover immediately. The change was so rapid that it could

> hardly be credited. In less than six weeks she was entirely healed. In June, 1892, the child was again, taken very ill. For the sake of speed a doctor was called, who said that there was no hope of saving her, and desired a consultation; the most skilled physician was called; she grew worse. Seeing her growing worse, her father desired to have the same Christian Science healer as before and asked me to go for him. I told him that in my opinion it was his duty to go; he did not hesitate but went at once to the healer's house. By comparison it was found that very soon after the father reached the healer's house the child began to improve, and in three weeks she was in perfect health and remains mentally and physically a monument of the power of Truth through Christian Science. (11.7: 326-7)

As in previous accounts, we have the theme of medical failure informing the decision to seek alternatives and the observable turnaround once a healer is consulted. In stories involving children, however, we also often get a profound sense of parental responsibility. The pressure on parents to see to the health and well-being of their children was doubly great for Scientists. On the one hand, the public's tendency to blame Scientist parents in cases that did not have the desired outcome reinforces the subtly defensive posturing that one can read in this narrative. Though doctors appear in almost every *Journal* account, the assurances about the doctor's purported skill and ultimate inadequacy is rhetorically inflected. On the other hand, Christian Science attributed the illness of minors not to a lack of understanding or belief on their own part *but on their parents' part.* Therefore, a parent whose faith was insufficient was guilty of injuring or killing his child. This probably accounts for the grandfather's insistence that the father go see the healer out of "duty," to serve as a sign of his own commitment to Science and to the ultimate recovery of his child.

The goal of what Baumann calls the deconstruction of mortality is to leave modernity as a project unscandalized, to suggest that the effort to subject contingent nature to reason is good, is inviolate, will inevitably succeed. Thus, when death conquers, modernity looks for someone to blame:

> [A] death that has not been prevented does not undermine the authority of the medical profession. At worst it may stain the reputation of an individual doctor. But the condemnation of the individual practitioner only reinforces the authority of the art: the doctor's fault was not to use the tools and the procedures he *could* use. He is guilty precisely because the profession as a whole is capable of doing what he, a member of that profession who should have known better, did not do, though could have done. (Bauman 139)

One might say, then, that the defenders of modern medicine and Christian Scientists were motivated by the very same impulse whenever mortality intruded: defending the rational project by finding a responsible party to punish. As demonstrated in Eddy's reaction to the death of Harold Frederic and the publicity it received, whenever Christian Scientists did speak out publicly concerning the cases of people who died in their care, it was usually to disavow the practitioner. When telling their own stories, the blame often turned inward, death attributed to a lack of faith. John Ellis makes sense of the harrowing experience of losing his daughter by blaming his and his family's failure to follow the instructions of the healer and dismiss the doctors from the case (a radical stance even by Scientist standards considering Eddy's gesture of tolerance in *Science and Health*). He solves the puzzle of death by turning the blame inward, and as a discourse, Christian Science solves that same problem by framing healing through Scientific understanding as a recursive, open-ended process culminating in the obsolescence of all physical processes, including aging, death, and reproduction.

CONCLUSION

Christian Scientists proved uniquely effective in translating experiences of illness and healing into narratives that could serve as models and inspirations for co-religionists and potential converts. As the epigraph to this chapter indicates, Eddy understood that this practical, *demonstrative* element was, perhaps, the most compelling argument for the

efficacy and even superiority of her method. And as William James himself recognized in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, the way the individual convert experienced the event, the way they incorporated it into their life narratives was far more important than whether or not an actual organic healing had taken place, whether or not there was a disease there in the first place, whether or not it was "all in their head."

The primacy of individual experience and observation over and above scientific proof marks a particular point of anxiety for the modern medical profession and for the project of scientific modernization in general. Even in the twenty-first century, we can find examples of how personal experience and its translation into narrative supersede the persuasive power of statistics and laboratory studies. A 2008 article in *Scientific American* explored this basic fact of human perception through the controversy over the relationship between childhood vaccines and autism. Despite overwhelming evidence against such a causal link, visible activists, including celebrities like Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Jenny McCarthy, and Jim Carrey continue to advance the theory as rates of vaccination in the United States and Europe have declined. Anecdotes about parents who saw dramatic changes in their children following vaccination have proven more powerful for some individuals than the overwhelming scientific consensus:

> Our brains are belief engines that employ association learning to seek and find patterns. Superstition and belief in magic are millions of years old, whereas science, with its methods of controlling for intervening variables to circumvent false positives, is only a few hundred years old. So it is that any medical huckster promising that A will cure B has only to advertise a handful of successful anecdotes in the form of testimonials. (Shermer)

In addition to this cognitive explanation, we see the power of narrative to make sense of illness experiences at work. Jenny McCarthy appeared on Oprah in the fall of 2007, demanding to know, "What number will it take for people just to start listening to what the mothers of children with autism have been saying for years—which is we vaccinated

our babies and something happened? That's it" (Qtd. in Specter 79). As Michael Specter reports, "when confronted with data from the Centers for Disease Control that seemed to provide scientific refutation of her claims, McCarthy responded, 'My science is named Evan [her son] and he's at home. That's my science'" (Specter 79). The now refuted link between vaccines and autism provides, for many people, a logical, internally consistent narrative that explains an otherwise confounding and mysterious problem. McCarthy's narrative about her son, which for her is the only science that matters, includes a restitution component. Since the 2007 interview, she claimed that she had "cured" her autistic son through diet.

The great irony of modernity is that it created, in the words of Baumann, this "drive to mastery; a mode of being shot through with hope, ambition, and confidence," creating the desire to overcome the problems of existence through reason without ever finally alleviating those conditions. Christian Science—rather than being seen as an aberration, a side-trip on humanity's unfailing trajectory toward scientific enlightenment and conquest of the human body—needs to be understood as yet another of humanity's unsuccessful bids for immortality, a bid that rather successfully blended the rhetorics of religion and science to attract a following in a culture in which both constructs were highly valued.

This chapter has explored the function of narrative within Christian Science through the accounts of lay believers who are likely to have done relatively little other writing in their lives. The following chapters deal with now-canonical literary professionals, two of whom (Twain and Dreiser) were already famous at the time of their Christian Science-related writing and one of whom (Cather) would shortly become so. Although each these writers was ambivalent, at best, about Christian Science, all three regarded it as a discourse centrally involved, for better or worse, in producing the

twentieth-century United States. Exploring the relationships each writer had with Christian Science helps to illuminate not only specific moments in their careers but also the degree to which Christian Science served as an occasion for narrative and an occasion for debates about larger social and cultural issues.

CHAPTER THREE--The Nightmare of History: Mark Twain and the Limits of Demystification

If conversions to new religions or to old ones were in any considerable degree achieved through the intellect … the inquirer into Christian Science might go away unconvinced and unconverted. But we all know that conversions are seldom made in that way.
-*Mark Twain,* Christian Science (89)

In 1902, the first of Mark Twain's satirical essays about Christian Science began appearing in *North American Review*. Though replete with his customary humor, many opponents of Christian Science were disappointed in them. The majority of his criticisms were directed at Mrs. Eddy's allegedly autocratic management style, not at the central beliefs she espoused, a letdown for people who had been waiting for someone with the public standing and rhetorical flair to put all her nonsense to bed for good. Frederick Peabody, who had been supplying Sam Clemens with information about Christian Science, wrote of his profound disappointment in one of his many letters to the distinguished author: "Your adoption of the Christian Scientist claim as to the extent of their influence … and the actuality of their cures, will be hailed by them with rejoicing, but cannot but be regarded by those who are combating the harmful influence … as unfortunate" (Peabody, 2 Dec 1902). He concludes this particular letter with the hope that he and Clemens are of one mind in their "wish for the domination of sanity, not the sanity of your article, but absolute sanity in the affairs of men" (Peabody, 2 Dec 1902).

In fact, sanity was hardly the goal of Mark Twain in making Christian Science and Eddy herself the targets of his satire during the late 1890s and 1900s. Rather, Twain saw in Mrs. Eddy another example of human folly and overweening pride: "Making fun of that shameless old swindler, Mother Eddy, is the only thing about it I take any interest in. At bottom I suppose I take a private delight in seeing the human race making an ass of itself again—which it has always done whenever it had the chance" (Clemens to

Peabody, 5 Dec 1902). As he would tell his other principle informant—William McCrackan, former writer for the *Arena* and member of the Christian Science Publishing Society—on the very same day, "my irreverence and disrespect are pretty exclusively for her [Mrs. Eddy], not for her flock. I believe the flock to be honest & sincere, & that she is neither" (Clemens to McCrackan, 5 December 1902).[68] Yet over the course of a six-month long correspondence, Peabody would feed Clemens insider information about Christian Science as fodder for his articles and continue to express his wish that Mark Twain summon his considerable linguistic powers to "inject a little sanity into the situation" (Peabody, 13 Dec 1902). Peabody would repeat the word "sanity" over and over in their exchanges. As I shall demonstrate in this chapter, for Peabody and those who rallied to his efforts to combat Christian Science in the courtroom and in print, the problem presented by Christian Science was an intellectual problem. Those who followed Mrs. Eddy were, from their perspective, quite simply mad or irrational. From Twain's perspective, humankind throughout its history had rarely ever been quite sane or rational. As he wrote to Dr. Hale, in his early attempts to write something on Christian Science, "I was trying to prove that men are born crazy, and that <u>that</u>, by help of some other circumstances, secures perpetuity and a wide dominion for the new fad" (Clemens, 1 November 1899).[69] So the problem presented by Christian Science was not a problem of

---

[68] Clemens's correspondence with McCrackan is an interesting counterpoint to his correspondence with Peabody. Whereas Peabody seemed to tax the author's patience, McCrackan, as a literary man himself, seemed to inspire considerable respect in spite of his assiduous (but gracious) attempts to correct Twain's misstatements of fact in the articles for *North American Review*. McCrackan wrote a rejoinder for the magazine, and Clemens insisted on sharing drafts of his own articles with McCrackan in order to allow the other writer to directly address his original claims. As early plans for the book developed, Clemens, McCrackan and Munro (editor of *North American Review*) had an understanding that McCrackan's article would be published as a chapter in the book version of *Christian Science.* Publication of the latter was, however, eventually delayed, and McCrackan's article did not make it into the version that finally appeared in 1907.

[69] In this letter, Clemens intimates that Livy Clemens, his wife, "suppressed" some of these writings because of his outlandish claims about Christian Science's potential for world dominance. "Mrs. Clemens

information but of human nature. Writing during an age of business trusts and imperial expansion, Twain saw Christian Science as yet another example—like slavery and the invasion of island nations—of the human willingness to relinquish their own freedom or the freedom of others for an idea, a tendency that implicated even the most ostensibly "rational" individuals.

SAMUEL CLEMENS AND CHRISTIAN SCIENCE: A BRIEF HISTORY

Frederick Peabody is not the only reader to be mystified by the enigma represented by Mark Twain's writings on Christian Science, which consist of the articles for *North American Review* and *Cosmopolitan* that were published in book form in 1907 as *Christian Science* and an unfinished story called "The Secret History of Eddypus, World Empire." These writings vacillate between a tacit acceptance of the central tenets of Christian Science, admiration for Mary Baker Eddy, and apocalyptic predictions about the threat that the movement and its leader posed to American democracy. As such, most readers seem to prefer to set this fragment of Twain's opus down and back away slowly. And indeed, as Robert Peel reports, William McCrackan thought that Clemens was writing under conditions of extreme mental disturbance: "In one of their conversations, Clemens told him how time and again he would be roused out of a sound sleep at night by an 'impelling force' which would send him downstairs to his library to dash off abusive letters to 'the woman in Concord' in a torment of rage" (Peel 204). Echoing a rather common sentiment among Twain scholars, Laura E. Skandera-Trombley calls *Christian Science* "almost unreadable" (172). Contemporary scholars who do write about it tend to explain its existence biographically. Twain had, indeed, endorsed mind cure at

---

despises prophets," he says, "but no matter. I shall smuggle those suppressed chapters into a book next spring. For when I am engaged in a good work I have no principles" (Clemens, 1 November 1899).

various points in his career, publishing his own theories about the power of the mind to influence other minds across great distances in an article called "Mental Telegraphy," which appeared in *Harper's* in 1891. Mind cure was among the many sectarian treatments that Clemens sought for himself and his family over the course of his lifetime. K. Patrick Ober's *Mark Twain and Medicine* rigorously documents Clemens's mistrust of allopathic medicine and his family's eclectic approach to treatment. At various points in their family history, the Clemenses would dabble in hydropathy, patent medicines, electrotherapy, rest cure, and homeopathy. All three Clemens daughters would avail themselves of the services of Christian Science practitioners, and after her father's death, Clara would go on to write a book, *Awake to a Perfect Day*, about her belief in Eddy's doctrine. Clemens, during Livy's long final illness, wrote to Joe Twichell that,

> The physicians are doing good work with her, but my notion is, that no art of healing is the best for all ills. I should distribute the ailments around: surgery-cases to the surgeon … nervous prostration to the Christian Scientist; most ills to the allopath & the homeopath; & (my own in particular case) rheumatism, gout & bronchial attacks to the osteopathist. (Clemens to Twichell, 4 April 1903).

However, there is a general consensus that in spite of his interest in mind cure, something snapped inside Sam Clemens following the death of his daughter Susy. Susy had sought the treatment of a Christian Science practitioner in Connecticut during her long bout of depression (a recourse that her father actually recommended to her in a letter) and then during the disease that eventually killed her. A few Twain scholars, including Hamlin Hill, have suggested that Susy's interest in Christian Science was therefore, "perhaps fatal" ("Afterword," *Christian* 1).[70] In any event, Clemens appears to have emerged from

[70] A problematic claim to say the very least. Susy was diagnosed with spinal meningitis by the allopathic doctor who did actually attend her case near the end, and in an age without reliable antibiotics, her fate had such a physician been called sooner is far from certain.

the experience disillusioned, a feeling that was compounded by his wife Livy's long final illness, the last of a lifetime of "hysterical" or psychosomatic complaints.

Most biographical explanations of *Christian Science* position Sam Clemens as a metonymic figure for the U.S. in the late nineteenth century, a mouthpiece for the nation's social and cultural concerns. According to Ober, the suffering and medical eclecticism of the Clemens family was similar to that of most U.S.-Americans. Similarly, Clemens' religious skepticism, his uncertainty about the existence and goodness of God was emblematic of what Harold Bush calls the spiritual crisis of his age. The modern West was also facing new questions about the public role of religion, the public role of women, and the shifting dynamics of power in an age of global capitalism. As Eddy biographer Robert Peel notes, Twain's screeds against Christian Science were quite possibly attempts to work out his anxieties about these issues and to displace certain uncomfortable aspects of himself onto Mary Baker Eddy:

> Mark Twain—who, like any other woman-worshiping American male of his generation, idolized his invalid wife; who for thirty-two years called his kindly older friend, Mrs. Mary Fairbanks, "Mother" and conferred virtual sainthood on a prettified Joan of Arc before the Holy Office got around to the task officially—found it uproarious that Christian Scientists of the day should bestow the title of Mother on Mrs. Eddy. Also, having married, made, lost, and laboriously recouped a fortune, he found it outrageous that the incessantly busy founder of Christian Science should have earned enough to live during her last years in modest comfort on a pleasant country estate which could not compete in splendor with his own successive mansions in Hartford and Riverdale. (198)

Similarly, Thomas Johnson has read the Eddy of *Christian Science* as a conscious literary double for Mark Twain:

> He was candid enough with himself to recognize his own powerful attraction to the same worldly values of money, domination, and status he condemned in others. He also realized, in a degree, that in attacking this image of Eddy he was exorcising his own psychological demons—lashing out at the elements in his own character which haunted him, particularly in

> his relation with Livy. The Eddy-figure he created was a kind of alter ego for Clemens embodying the darker side of this personality. He said of her and himself in one of those satirical but terribly self-revealing asides that punctuate his writing: "We seem to be curiously alike." (319)

In other words, most scholars tend to explain the strangeness of Twain's writings about Christian Science—his wildly shifting tone, his obsession with the minute details of Eddy's church management, and his weird apocalyptic predictions—by looking to the details of Twain's life.[71] Rarely do critics examine Twain's major sources of information about Christian Science as the movement existed in the late 1890s and 1910s—namely Frederic Peabody and his client, Josephine Woodbury—or consider the way in which Twain's Christian Science project entered into a lively and significant public debate about the status of the movement. This was a debate that, for Twain and many of his contemporaries, had deep moral and even world-historical implications. Furthermore, it was a debate that was occurring not only between Christian Scientists and those who found Eddy's claims preposterous but among Christian Scientists and mental healers themselves. Namely, in addition to Eddy's unorthodox religio-medical theories, her (rumored) manner of church government and the willingness of her followers to submit unquestioningly to her authority left some observers, particularly Twain, considerably alarmed.[72] Yes, *Christian Science* and "The Secret History of Eddypus" are the works of a grieving father who felt betrayed by a medical sect that members of his family had put their faith in, with possibly disastrous consequences. But they are also the works of a cultural observer who read in Christian Science and Mary Baker Eddy the symptoms of a

---

[71] For more biographical perspectives on Twain and Christian Science, see Macnaughton, 118-21, 189-94; and Phipps, 324-27.

[72] The fact that she was a woman wielding this sort of power almost certainly played a role in their unease, as has been pointed out by Peel, Gottschalk, and Gill. For other feminist perspectives on Twain's response to Eddy see Schrager; the chapter "Mark Twain and Mary Baker Eddy" in Stoneley; and brief mentions in Stahl, J.D.

nation that had either lost its principles or had never had them to begin with. That nation—having just annexed a whole host of island nations—was increasingly willing to look askance as the freedoms of distant peoples were revoked and increasingly willing to submit unquestioningly to the demands of patriotic conformity for the sake of physical and emotional comfort. Rather than regarding Christian Science as a side trip on humanity's untrammeled march toward scientific and intellectual progress, a distressing but minor aberration, as many of his contemporaries saw it, Twain looked at Christian Science as s manifestation of features that were endemic to the human condition, particularly as those features were exemplified in the turn-of-the-century U.S., features that would not simply be brushed aside by scientific discovery or argument.

WOODBURY V. EDDY AND THE RISE OF FREDERICK PEABODY

It is somewhat ironic that the story of how Frederick Peabody became one of Mark Twain's principle informants in the completion of *Christian Science*—how he became the "voice of reason" among opponents of Christian Science in New England—involves little of what we might think of as clear-eyed and cool-headed rationality. I have detailed the circumstances of the Woodbury trial in Chapter One. Suffice it to say that Peabody and the opponents of Eddy who rallied around him positioned the case as a golden opportunity to subject the tenets of Christian Science to the rational judgment of the courtroom.[73] Peel argues that "the action was clearly a propaganda move. … Mrs.

[73] Woodbury was obviously motivated by a desire for revenge, and Peabody, as Gillian Gill argues, was motivated by a personal animus for Mrs. Eddy the source of which we may never really know. Desire for fame and a ferocious anti-feminism may have been contributing factors. Certain aspects of Peabody's biography suggest a desire for social status, a casual acquaintance with the truth, and a predilection for seeking revenge against women he felt had wronged him. In 1912, Peabody sued his ex-wife for libel, and the ensuing trial revealed that Peabody had lied to his fiancée and her family about his financial viability, that he married her for her modest wealth, and that he proceeded to embezzle said fortune away from her. Anna Peabody eventually left him, taking their two daughters, when her husband drove the family into crushing debt. Peabody sued his wife three times between 1901 and 1908 and finally obtained a divorce in

Eddy was, as her distinguished Boston attorney Samuel J. Elder put it, 'the only mark they are aiming at.' And Mrs. Eddy not as an individual but as the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science" (156). Discussion of the trial in major newspapers and medical journals reveals that many enemies of Eddy were willing to overlook the tawdry circumstances of the case and the fact that the plaintiff was in many ways the very incarnation of their most fevered fantasies of Eddy herself (including their suspicion that she was a sexually voracious woman who preyed on younger men). Rather, the case was seen as an excuse to bring certain truths about Eddy's theories and the inner workings of her church to light. Though the media storm that surrounded the case was to outlive Mrs. Eddy, the trial itself lasted only a week: "Peabody could find only two witnesses to testify that they had believed Mrs. Eddy's symbolism to refer to Mrs. Woodbury" (Peel 170).

Despite the outcome, Peabody's dramatics in the courtroom left an impression. For the next decade, newspapers would become obsessed with what many saw as the opaque and sinister machinations occurring behind the scenes in Eddy's organization, attributing—sometimes to the octogenarian woman herself, sometimes to her male lieutenants—a tremendous amount of power, even outside of the Church. Peabody and Woodbury embarked on careers as anti-Christian Science pundits. In newspaper interviews, Woodbury portrayed herself as an innocent who was brainwashed and controlled by Eddy: "I was being fed on Eddy pap for a constant diet. We were taught that the message of God as sent through 'Mother Mary' and set forth in 'Science and Health,' should receive all our attention and devotion. … I worked hard for the cause in which I had put all my hopes, all my enthusiasm. It was a dreadful shock when the

---

1908. The 1912 libel case was also part of an attempt to renegotiate visitation rights. According to Gill, "Judge Almy, who heard the case, gave a crushing indictment of Peabody's faults" (438).

awakening came" ("Declares"). In his published works and lectures, Peabody propagated what became some of the most pervasive and persistent inaccuracies about Christian Science: that Eddy had deliberately and egregiously plagiarized her theories from the unpublished manuscripts of Phineas Parkhurst Quimby, that she had been a hysteric since childhood, that she was a drug addict and sexual deviant, that she was a monstrous mother, and that she was pathologically paranoid and obsessed with accruing wealth. In one letter to Samuel Clemens he would rather feverishly call Eddy a "vile imposter and nympho-maniac," a reference, perhaps, to Eddy's three marriages and the fact that she enjoyed many platonic friendships and business partnerships with men. Clemens seems to have detected Peabody's lack of cool-headedness on the subject of Mrs. Eddy,[74] saying of one of Peabody's public addresses, "I read it with extreme interest—but I noted its large defect all along: you show *temper*, acrimony, detestation. It is bad art—exceedingly bad art. You should have aroused those feelings in the *reader* only; & you should have made him storm at you for *not* showing them yourself. You throw away half of your case" (Clemens, 5 Dec 1902).[75]

---

[74] And there is some indication that at various points Clemens only tolerated the lawyer's presumptuous and increasingly fawning attentions and valued him as a source of information rather than as an ideological brother. At one point Peabody insists that he will publish one of Clemens's letters to him, saying "Don't forbid it, for I am [illegible] the interests of the public too great for much consideration of personal feelings" (Peabody, 10 Dec 1902). Clemens responds, "Do you mean to tell me that my private letters are not safe in your hands? You want to go pretty carefully, now, & not make any mistake" (Clemens, 11 Dec 1902). Clemens would later apologize for writing all over Peabody's copy of the Church Rules, having forgotten that it was a borrowed book.

[75] In the interest of compounding the many ironies of these circumstances, it is worth noting that Woodbury's correspondence with Clemens demonstrated consummate professionalism. There is something delightful about the straightforward, business-like way in which she invites the most famous man of his generation to make an appointment with her: "If you wish to be posted as to where and how to find the "meatiest" paragraphs—"changes" etc etc., and will make an appointment, I will give you my aid. When you say. I have Thursday free, also Sat this week. Sincerely, J. Woodbury. P.S. If you phone me tomorrow [illegible] before eleven as to which books you would like I'll express them immediately." (Woodbury, 3 February 1902). William McCrackan, however, did not believe that Mrs. Woodbury's influence was benign. As Peel reports, McCrackan suspected that Clemens was writing under her hypnotic influence (204).

Clemens's early refusal to allow the voice of Mark Twain to be co-opted by the more strident elements anti-Eddyism stemmed from two major sources. First of all, given his past history with mental healing (and from a certain perspective, even in spite of it), Clemens was willing to acknowledge that the healing methods of Christian Scientists worked in many cases, though he thought their successes no great miracle. As he says in his letter to Peabody, "Yes, I think they make a great many cures—of *curable* diseases—there is no reason why they shouldn't. Cures by their methods have been made for 10,000 years" (Clemens, 5 Dec 1902). In this belief, Clemens was at odds with most of the medical profession but in perfect sympathy with other intellectual elites of his day, including William James. To be sure, Clemens harbored a special rancor for Mrs. Eddy herself, but that antipathy stemmed from what he—upon hearing the allegations of Peabody and Woodbury—perceived as her irresponsible use of power, not the self-evident wrongness of her beliefs. Peabody's project of demystification—which ironically produced of a number of myths concerning Christian Science and its founder—and the hopes that so many in the anti-Eddy camp placed in it was based on the assumption that clear-eyed reason and objective fact *must* inevitably triumph over obscurantism. Such assumptions reflected the positivist hopes that would come to define skeptical attitudes toward religion in the twentieth century: that religion must simply crumble away as science becomes more and more capable of describing the world in terms that do not appeal to external spiritual forces or magic. Those hopes have yet to be realized, and Twain's enigmatic prophecy that "In a hundred years, [Christian Science] will supplant all the other religions & boss all the governments" suggest that he had no illusions that they ever would (Clemens, 5 Dec 1902).[76] Rather than a steady march toward scientific

[76] Of course, Peabody thought this prediction preposterous and performed logical back flips asserting that Christian Science was marginal and its influence overstated while in the very same paragraph declaring it a grave danger to the public interest. History suggests that, in a way, they were both right. Religion—even

progress and intellectual enlightenment, Twain saw history as the story of human folly and doubted the ability of any historical subject to accurately judge the present or even understand the past.

"ERROR UNCOVERED"

"'Science and Health' says 'Error uncovered is two thirds destroyed.' The old lady must be pretty afar gone," wrote Henry Case, former member and organist of the First Church of Christ, Scientist in New York City, in a note to Frederick Peabody that was later passed on to Clemens (Case, n.d.). Indeed, Christian Science did share with its enemies a supreme confidence in the transcendent ability of the truth, whether obtained from empirical observation or divine revelation, to drive out untruth. As such, one of the problems with defining the problem of Christian Science as an intellectual or informational problem was that it assumes a perspective on history and on the efficacy of purely rational argument that, surprisingly, most Christian Scientists shared. Just as many of her opponents eagerly sought the authority of the courtroom as the space for proving, once and for all, that Mrs. Eddy was a charlatan, so Eddy herself relied on the language of testimony and disputation in the instructions she gave Christian Science healers. For Eddy, "error" was the belief in the body's reality, which manifested itself as physical infirmity. Thus,

> When the first symptoms of disease appear, dispute the testimony of the material senses with divine Science. Let your higher sense of justice destroy the false process of mortal opinions which you name law, and then you will not be confined to a sick-room. … Suffer no claim of sin or of sickness to grow upon the thought. Dismiss it with an abiding conviction that it is illegitimate, because you know that God is no more the author of

---

anti-scientific, anti-modern religion—survives and maintains a broad public presence in the world today, even though the members of the Church of Christ, Scientist in the form in which it appeared in the days of Twain and Eddy would not even fill a football stadium.

> sickness than He is of sin. You have no law of His to support the necessity either of sin or sickness, but you have divine authority for denying that necessity and healing the sick. (Eddy, *Science and Health* 390)

As I showed in the previous chapter, Eddy would also insist that Christian Science was "a demonstrative system of healing" that derived its authority from its ability to produce observable results. The "truths" that these observable results produced could then be used to combat the errors or diseases of other human beings.

It is both appropriate and ironic, then, that critics of Eddy would refer to Christian Science using the language of disease, mental illness, or epidemic. The *Illinois Medical Journal* would refer to an "epidemic of 'fads'" competing with the regular medical profession for patients (534). Another writer for the *Journal of the Kansas Medical Society* would bemoan the "sporadic and sometimes almost epidemic, hysteria of the people for patent nostrums, and such delusions as vitopathy, osteopathy, Christian Science, etc." (312). Extending the metaphor, Dr. Victor C. Vaughan writing for the *Brooklyn Medical Journal* bemusedly regarded

> [T]he present widespread belief in pseudo-science as a form of atavism, a tendency to reversion to that state in which man read his destiny in the stars and regarded disease as a visitation from heaven. Please permit me to say that I am not a pessimist and that I do not believe that this pathological condition is going to spread to the great mass of thinking people in this country. I have no fear of this, but as a mental epidemic it offers an interesting study. Its etiology, pathology, treatment, both prophylactic and curative, are proper matters for scientific inquiry. (134)

Critics of Christian Science tended to believe that those most vulnerable to its depredations were the poor and uneducated. Intellectual elites were generally regarded as immune to its effects. Dr. Vaughan attributed the success of Christian Science to the "half-educated classes," suggesting that while "the majority of the people in this land are neither mental nor moral degenerates. ... It must be admitted, however, that there are

many degenerates among us and they are by no means confined to the humbler walks of life" (136).

His prescription for combating this epidemic of derangement was, of course, more widespread scientific education and tight regulations on medical practice. [77] Doctors as a professional class would consistently appeal to the legislative and judicial systems as necessary allies in exposing the falsehoods propagated by Christian Scientists and ensuring that the public was protected from them. The criminal trials of Christian Scientists and debates in state legislatures over the legalities of medical practice were rallying points for those who wished to see the movement snuffed out, as well as perennial sources of frustration when very few of them produced the desired or expected result. This is perhaps why the Woodbury case was seized upon by Eddy's opponents, who had to perform some head-spinning logical somersaults in order to make an argument for why the nature of Eddy's theology and claims about herself had anything to do with the accusations of libel. For example, the *Interstate Medical Journal* would lead its story on the Woodbury case with the byline, "An Attempt to Expose Christian Science" and attribute to Peabody the claim that "the libel, embracing the whole Christian Science, cannot be made intelligible to a jury without bringing into court the most extravagant of Mrs. Eddy's teachings. It is to be hoped that such an exposure will effectually dispose of this cult" (594).

Eddy and her contemporaries were similar in both the rhetorical and metaphysical equivalences they drew between error and mental or physical infirmity. As such, they can be read as participants in what Bruno Latour calls "the modern type of debunking" or

[77] Though Vaughan would tacitly acknowledge what would become a significant practical problem in disseminating the latest scientific knowledge to the public: that in an age when knowledge was becoming increasingly specialized and rapidly changing, it becomes difficult to make such knowledge both quickly available and readily comprehensible.

"denunciation" (Latour 43).[78] Both groups became capable of speaking about themselves as the unveilers of truths previously kept hidden by illegitimate authorities. Both revolted from religion—Christian Science from its staid Puritan forbears and scientists from religion writ large—and experienced it as a revolution in the name of truth. As Latour says of the Enlightenment thinkers and first natural scientists,

> The obscurity of the olden days, which illegitimately blended together social needs and natural reality, meanings and mechanisms, signs and things, gave way to a luminous dawn that cleanly separated material causality from human fantasy. The natural sciences at last defined what Nature was, and each new emerging scientific discipline was experienced as a total revolution by means of which it was finally liberated from its prescientific past, from its Old Regime. (35)

Primary sources indicate that this conversionary and emancipatory epistemology was very much a part of how U.S.-American doctors understood their role in history.[79] Writing for the *New York Medical Journal* in 1889, A.S. Coe stated that the "reasons why medical science is behind all other sciences in its development and practical applications to the wants of the people" were primarily because medicine had been "subordinated to the vague speculations of philosophers and metaphysicians and the mysticisms of the priesthood" (406). Medicine needed to be "emancipated from the traditions of the past, and freed from their dogmatic spirit by rejecting all hypotheses and returning to the unbiased study of natural processes as shown in health and disease" (406). Tracing the history of medical absurdities from Galen to the writer's present, Coe would identify Christian Science as a particularly pernicious example of an attempt to restore the Old

[78] As Casper Bruun Jensen and Kjetil Rodje so helpfully explain, denunciation is "understanding the claim of the bearded old man as lies, which hide the truth that 'matters of fact' are really just socially stabilized states of affairs" (43).

[79] Similarly, Mary Baker Eddy claimed to have discovered by similar means the fact that all material causality *was* human fantasy and left behind both the old science and the old religion at the dawn of Christian Science.

Regime and once again combine medicine with theology and metaphysics, which had "until within a comparatively recent period, absorbed and misguided all efforts to advance rational medicine and place it on a scientific basis" (406). Christian Science was a problem for Frederick Peabody, doctors and others because it threatened to reverse the course of the revolution, to take us back, as Vaughn says, to "that state in which man read his destiny in the stars and regarded disease as a visitation from heaven" (136). For Mary Baker Eddy, Christian Science needed to be preserved because it represented the *true* revolution. Both were doggedly committed to the idea of the history of their disciplines as the history of a rupture between what came before and after, a moment of crisis conversion in which truth was revealed and error set aside. Twain takes up the very view of historical narrative shared by Christian Scientists and their enlightened critics in "The Secret History of Eddypus." The narrative voice of this story, writing a millennium after Christian Science has become the dominant world religion, says:

> We are in the habit of speaking of the 'dawn' of our era. It is a misleading expression inherited from the ancients. It conveys a false impression, for it places before the mind's vision a picture of brooding darkness, with a pearly light rising soft and rich in the east to dispel it and conquer it. In the interest of fact let us seek a more truthful figure wherewith to picture the advent of Christian Science (as it was originally called) as a political force. (333)

This is why, I argue, Mark Twain's *actual* views on the Christian Science problem were so difficult to pin down. Because while Twain, throughout his writing on Christian Science, often indulges in attempts to demystify, he is decidedly not committed to the history of the dawn. Rather, he views history as a continuity, a continuity in which human idiosyncrasy is the ever-present and abiding theme.

The first major section of *Christian Science* is the most nuanced and enigmatic part of the work. Though it begins as a burlesque of a Christian Science healing narrative—in which the author claims that he was healed by a Christian Science practitioner of multiple bone fractures resulting from a fall from a precipice in Switzerland, though he contracted a cold that the healer could not cure but a horse doctor could—this first section evolves into an even-handed intervention into the contemporary conversation on the influence of Eddy's movement. Among other things, he argues that the question of whether or not Eddy stole her theories from Quimby is probably baseless and entirely beside the point. However, he pays particular attention to the question of how exactly a religion like Christian Science goes about generating a following and attempts to lay to rest the widespread assumption that its following was confined to a marginal group of poorly educated, desperate individuals.

Twain seems to have been acutely aware of the absurdities that invariably resulted from attempts to frame the problem of Christian Science as purely intellectual, as part of a historical clash between religion and science. Such a framework tended to generate a sort of double-speak in which critics had to rhetorically frame the fledgling religious movement as a monstrous threat to human progress without betraying a lack of confidence in the ability of that progress to proceed untrammeled. In order to convince their audience of the exigency of the problem presented by Christian Science, critics had to resort to florid exhortations about its dangers. But in order to resolve the cognitive dissonance generated by the proposition that something so odd and so, well, *female* could pose a threat to modern society, they had to belittle the movement in the very next sentence. Peabody himself demonstrates these logical and rhetorical back flips, when in the space of two paragraphs he declares first that Christian Science could never "fool any considerable number of decent people. [Eddy's] lies and frauds are easily [illegible] to

people not already smitten" and then states that the stakes of this conflict were no less than "the suffering and death of children who are the helpless victims of [illegible] parents" (Peabody, 10 December 1902). Similarly, the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, in an article gravely titled "Christian Science and Death," would present the sensational narrative of the death of Harold Frederic under the care of two Christian Scientists, only to declare at the end that "Christian Science treatment is neither more nor less than a *fin de siècle* fad, a drawing-room cult, and that it is the counterpart of the culpable negligence which has brought the peculiar people of the less educated classes within the range and operation of the criminal law of the country" (429).

It was this identification of Christian Science with the ill-educated, and usually female, masses that allowed for the critic to be alarmist while reassuring himself and his colleagues that they were somehow immune to the entire business.[80] Twain compares this sort of magical thinking to a religion itself, declaring that one "wise" man who assured him "that Christian Science was a fleeting craze and would soon perish" was merely one example of a "prompt and all-competent stripe of prophet" who "is always to be had in the market at ground-floor rates. He does not stop to load, or consider, or take aim, but lets fly just as he stands. Facts are nothing to him, he has no use for such things; he works wholly by inspiration" (*Christian* 87). According to Twain, the universal reason offered for the faddish transience of Christian Science was always as follows:

> "There is nothing *to* Christian Science; there is nothing about it that appeals to the intellect; its market will be restricted to the unintelligent, the mentally inferior, the people who do not think." They called that a reason why the cult would not flourish and endure. It seems the equivalent of saying: "There is no money in tinware; there is nothing about it that appeals to the rich; its market will be restricted to the poor." It is like

[80] It was the fact that Frederic was such a well educated and accomplished literary man that caused such outcries of astonishment when he surrendered himself in his final months to the sole treatment of two female Christian Science practitioners.

> bringing forward the best reason in the world why Christian Science should flourish and live, and then blandly offering it as a reason why it should sicken and die. (88)

Environment, for Twain, is the force that supersedes rational assessment in the dissemination of religious or political ideas: "It is not the ability to reason that makes the Presbyterian, or the Baptist, or the Methodist, or the Catholic, or the Mohammedan, or the Buddhist, or the Mormon; it is *environment*" (93). The evidence for the primacy of environment is seen in the tendency of religious groups to pass on beliefs to the children born into them:

> If religions were got by reasoning, we should have the extraordinary spectacle of an American family with a Presbyterian in it, and a Baptist, and a Methodist, a Catholic, a Mohammedan, a Buddhist, and a Mormon. A Presbyterian family does not produce Catholic families or other religious brands, it produces its own kind; and not by intellectual processes, but by association. (93)

The success of Christian Science, therefore, must depend not on its ability to make an intellectual appeal but to establish an environment. And in that regard, he argues, Christian Science does succeed: "There are families of Christian Scientists in every community in America, and each family is a factory; each family turns out a Christian Science product at the customary intervals, and contributes it to the Cause in the only way in which contributions of recruits to Churches are ever made on a large scale—by the puissant forces of personal contact and association" (95). For Peabody and other critics of Eddy, the problem of Christian Science was informational—the people who listened to her simply did not know any better. For Twain, the problem was human nature itself.

THE LAW OF PERIODICAL REPETITION

To be sure, Clemens had his own particular concerns about the growth of Christian Science and the spread of Eddy's influence. As Hamlin Hill indicates in his afterword for the Cambridge Edition of *Christian Science*, "[S]omething about both Christian Science and Mary Baker Eddy obsessed Mark Twain. … the extent of his writings and vehemence of his rancor suggest that both the premises of the theology and the personality of its founder struck raw nerves too close for calm reaction" (7). But his lack of commitment to the historical inevitability of the rise of scientific rationalism allowed him to avoid the logical contortions of Peabody and some of his contemporaries. Rather than discussing all the ways in which her theories were incorrect and could simply be swept aside, the bulk of *Christian Science* is devoted to an analysis of the By-Laws of the national Christian Science Association and the argument that Mary Baker Eddy was a would-be despot, an emblem of the increasing willingness of Americans to hand over their liberties to charismatic leaders. While he stipulated that she and her followers were sincere in their beliefs,[81] Twain detected in Mrs. Eddy's style of leadership a shrewd mind for business and a Machiavellian cunning for acquiring and retaining power. Summarizing the history of Christian Science, he says,

> We have seen what her methods were after she passed the stage where her divine ambassadorship was granted its exequatur in the hearts and minds of her followers; we have seen how steady and fearless and calculated and orderly was her march thenceforth from conquest to conquest; we have seen her strike dead, without hesitancy, any hostile or questionable force that rose in her path: first, the horde of pretenders that sprang up and tried to take her Science and its market away from her—she crushed them, she

[81] However, he excuses Eddy's followers for being blind to the darker aspects of her nature: "She has lifted them out of grief and care and doubt and fear, and made their lives beautiful. … To ask them to examine with a microscope the character of such a benefactor; to ask them to examine it at all; to ask them to look at a blemish which another person believes he has found in it—well, in their place could you do it? Would you do it? Wouldn't you be ashamed to do it? If a tramp had rescued your child from fire and death, and saved its mother's heart from breaking, could you see his rags? Could you smell his breath? Mrs. Eddy has done more than that for these people" (287).

> obliterated them: when her own National Christian Science Association became great in numbers and influence, and loosely and dangerously garrulous, and began to expound the doctrines according to its own uninspired notions, she took up her sponge without a tremor of fear and wiped the Association out; when she perceived that the preachers in her pulpits were becoming afflicted with doctrine-tinkering, she recognized the danger of it, and did not hesitate nor temporize, but promptly dismissed the whole of them in a day, and abolished their office permanently; we have seen that, as fast as her power grew, she was competent to take the measure of it, and that as fast as its expansion suggested to her gradually awakening native ambition a higher step she took it; and so, by this evolutionary process, we have seen the gross money-lust relegated to second place, and the lust of empire and glory rise above it. A splendid dream; and by force of the qualities born in her she is making it come true. (274-5)

One can detect the influence of the Josephine Woodbury case in this passage and in Twain's belief that Mary Baker Eddy represented a great threat to individual freedom. Peabody and Woodbury, after all, attracted sympathy by positioning the former student as an innocent victim of Mrs. Eddy's desire to suppress dissension within her ranks. Clemens clearly also accepted Woodbury's accusation that Mrs. Eddy saw herself as the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy—the woman "clothed with the sun" and "with the sun and moon under her feet" from the book of Revelation—a claim that more likely originated with a group of her followers. In Twain's more strident claim that Mrs. Eddy and her successors were positioned to become major world powers in the style of Napoleon or the Pope, one can also see Twain mingling Woodbury's portrayal of Eddy with his broader concerns about the erosion of democracy at a time when the United States was positioned to become a world empire into a more pessimistic but no less apocalyptic historical vision.[82] Notably, this is not a vision of history in which scientific

[82] This vision is filtered, of course, through a bit of misogyny and anti-Catholicism. In what is the single best critical assessment (among very few) from the field of literary studies of Twain's views on Eddy, Cynthia Schrager dissects the nuances of the relationship between gender and power in the thinking of both Twain and Eddy.

rationalism and religious obscurantism compete for dominance but a vision in which science, technology, religious demagoguery, and commerce collude with one another and various instruments of power to enslave humanity.

Twain's views on Mary Baker Eddy and her potential for world domination were very much a part of his broader theory of history, which emerges most vividly in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* and in some of the stranger parts of both his published and unpublished short fiction. As he was writing *Christian Science,* he was also working on a piece of dystopian fiction called "The Secret History of Eddypus, World Empire," which essentially imagines that the unthinkable has happened: the Great Civilization of the nineteenth century has fallen, and a world empire has been established with the successors of Mary Baker Eddy (who all go by that name) at its head. At the same time, he was also looking back to the very beginnings of human history, writing the diaries of major Old Testament characters, including Adam, Eve, Methuselah, and Shem.[83] In this counter-history of the era preceding Noah's flood, Twain imagines human history as a cycle of progress, decadence, destruction, and rebirth, a cycle described by the narrator of one fragment, the Mad Philosopher, as the Law of Periodical Repetition.

In these narratives, antediluvian civilization looks very much like the late nineteenth century United States. It is a modern, industrialized society with the direct descendents of the "First Family"—Adam, Eve, and their children—at the top of its social hierarchy. Slavery, social stratification, exploitation, and religious hypocrisy appear as vague themes in these accounts of a society on the brink of calamity, and they appear much more fully developed in *Connecticut Yankee*, for which "Eddypus" was

[83] The editors of *The Bible According to Mark Twain* indicate that the similarities are more than simply thematic. Rather, "Working notes and other details" indicate that the two projects were linked in Twain's mind (36).

intended to be a sequel.[84] Science and technology play a rather dark role in presaging the decline and eventual destruction of the Great Republic in "Diaries Antedating the Flood." Twain depicts scientific curiosity as both an inborn gift and as the source of humankind's eventual destruction. The "Autobiography of Eve" portrays the prelapsarian Eve as a natural scientist, who shares with Adam an intense desire to inquire into the inner workings of Creation: "But studying, learning, inquiring into the cause and nature and purpose of everything we came across, were passions with us, and this research filled our days with brilliant and absorbing interest. Adam was by constitution and proclivity a scientist; I may justly say I was the same, and we loved to call ourselves by that name" (54). In fact, it is their ardor for discovery that brings about the Fall. As Twain revised the project that began as Eve's autobiography into the much broader "Diaries Antedating the Flood," he inserted an excerpt from Satan's diary, which shows Satan persuading Eve to eat the apple not by appealing to her vanity, as Milton's Satan does, but by exploiting her desire to understand concepts rendered meaningless to her without a Moral Sense.

Over the course of a millennium, this original civilization reaches heights of scientific and technological achievement on par with the early twentieth century. Eve's later diary, which includes a section called "Extracts from Article in 'The Radical,' Jan., 916," bemoans one of the unexpected but disastrous consequences of scientific advancement during the millennium following the Fall: overpopulation. Thanks to the extraordinarily long lives of Old Testament humans, improvements in sanitation, and the discovery of microbes, the human population swells to 60 billion and threatens to overwhelm planetary resources. At the end of the piece, the author looks to the depredations of war as the potential savior of human civilization saying, "Honor to whom

[84] See Schrager's discussion of the relationship between *Connecticut Yankee* and "Eddypus" in the article cited above. Also see John S. Tuckey's introduction to the section "The Nightmare of History" in *Mark Twain's Fables of Man.*

honor is due: the physician failed us,[85] war has saved us. Not that the killed and wounded amount to anything as a relief, for they do not; but the poverty and desolation caused by war sweep myriads away and make space for immigrants. War is a rude friend, but a kind one. It keeps us down to 60,000,000,000 and saves the hard-grubbing world alive. It is all that the globe can support" (72).[86]

Violence and suffering are shown to be by-products of technological marvel, but such calamity would not be possible were it not for commercial and financial innovation. In a later fragment, the voice of "Reginald Selkirk, the Mad Philosopher" emerges to declare this civilization "wonderful, in certain spectacular and meretricious ways; wonderful in scientific marvels and inventive miracles, wonderful in material inflation, which it calls advancement, progress, and other pet names; wonderful in spying-out the deep secrets of Nature—and its vanquishment of her stubborn laws; wonderful in its extraordinary financial and commercial achievements" (75). Finally, he declares it wonderful "in the surprises which it gets out of that great new birth, ORGANIZATION, the latest and most potent creation and miracle worker of the commercialized intellect" (76). In *Christian Science,* Twain would ascribe this talent for "Organization" and the

---

[85] It is remarkable how prominently medicine features in this section. Taking a jab at nineteenth century doctors and their "heroic" treatments (bloodletting, calomel dosing, etc.), the narrator refers to physicians as a boon in combating the overpopulation problem: "In the past fifty years science has reduced the doctor's effectiveness by half. He uses but one deadly drug now, where formerly he used ten" (71).

[86] There are times when these stories feel eerily contemporary, and this little screed on the overpopulation problem is no exception. The voice of this segment begins, "When the population reached five billions the earth was heavily burdened to support it" (70). A later segment called "From Diary of A Lady of the Blood, Third Grade" presages weapons of mass destruction, telling of an obscure scientist who "discovered a means whereby he could sweep a whole army out of existence in an instant" but would not reveal the secret "since war was already terrible enough and he would not be party to the augmentation of its destructiveness" (74). The shoemaker-emperor declares him a fool, states that this "invention would abolish war altogether," creates the weapon, and sets out "alone against the sovereigns of the eastern world, with it in his pocket. Only one army ever came against him. It formed itself in battle array in a great plain, and at a distance of twelve miles he blew it into the air, leaving no vestige of it behind but a few rags and buttons" (74-5)

management of enterprise to Mary Baker Eddy, and Christian Science does, in fact, appear in the Mad Philosopher's jeremiad as one of the elements that re-emerges in each cycle of human history.[87] For the author, Organization is the machine—enabled by modern science—that creates marvels of industry and commerce, that allows human beings to engage in collective efforts in ways heretofore unimagined, but it is also the machine that threatens the very fabric of democracy by inducing "the money-fever, sordid ideals, vulgar ambitions, and the sleep which does not refresh; it has invented a thousand useless luxuries, and turned them into necessities, it has created a thousand vicious appetites and satisfies none of them; it has dethroned God and set up a shekel in His place" (*Bible* 76). Twain saw Mrs. Eddy's particular genius not in the Great Idea—mental healing—but in her ability to turn the Great Idea into an organization and into a salable commodity. At various points in *Christian Science*, he compares the Christian Science organization to Standard Oil and the Klondike, merging his concerns about commercial monopolies with his observations about Mrs. Eddy's megalomaniacal tendencies.

In Mrs. Eddy's rise to prominence through the worshipful adoration of her followers and the unwillingness of critics to adequately assess the true threat she posed, Twain saw democracy on a gradual path of decline toward the restoration of monarchy and despotism. As John S. Tuckey states, "Civilization, he believed, was due to perish and be followed by a new Dark Age" (315). As Twain himself stated in his Autobiographical Dictation of January 15, 1907,

---

[87] "Did not the Science of Health rise, in the old time, and did it now pass into oblivion, and has it not latterly com again and brought with it its forgotten name? Will it perish once more? Many times, I think, as the ages drift on; and still come again and again. And the forgotten book, Science and Health, With Key to Scriptures—is it not with us once more, revised, corrected, and it orgies of style and construction tamed by an educated disciple? Will it not yet die, once, twice, a dozen times, and still at vast intervals rise again and successfully challenge the mind of man to understand it? We may not doubt it. By the Law of Periodical Repetition it must happen" (79).

> Republics have lived long, but monarchy lives forever. By our teaching, we learn that vast material prosperity always brings in its train conditions which debase the morals and enervate the manhood of a nation—then the country's liberties come into the market and are bought, sold, squandered, thrown away, and a popular idol is carried to the throne upon shields or shoulders of the worshiping people, and planted there in permanency. ("Fables" 316)

As such, the themes of "Diaries Antedating the Flood" carry over into "The Secret History of Eddypus," which predicts the turning of yet another cycle of history. This work is yet another set of personal reflections, this time a series of letters between an unnamed scholar and his secret correspondent. In these letters, he attempts to relate the "true history" of the calamity (a millennium past) that brought about the death of Western Civilization at the beginning of the twentieth century and the rise of a world empire ruled by the successors of Mary Baker Eddy (who are all also called Mary Baker G. Eddy, regardless of gender). As the narrator tells his interlocutor: "Warn your friend that he is getting Christian Science history mixed up with *history.* There is a difference between the two. If you are sure he is a safe person and not in the clandestine service of the Holy Office, you may whisper to him certain of the facts—but on your life put nothing on paper!" (*Fables* 318).

In this alternate world, China is "the only country where an enlightened civilization now exists" (322). Libraries have been destroyed, Christian Science and the Roman Catholic Church have merged, preserving the theology of Christian Science and the theocratic hierarchy of Catholicism. The narrator's bowdlerized American history reveals that the tendency toward despotism is a feature of human nature rather than an aberration. The scholar of the "Secret History" attempts to define civilization thus:

> Civilization is an elusive and baffling term. It is not easy to get at the precise meaning attached to it in those far distant times. In America and Europe it seems to have meant benevolence, gentleness, godliness, magnanimity, purity, love, and we gather that men considered it a duty to

> confer it as a blessing upon all lowly and harmless peoples of remote regions; but as soon as it was transplanted it became a blight, a pestilence, an awful terror, and they whom it was sent to benefit fled from its presence imploring their pagan gods with tears and lamentations to save them from it. The strength of such evidence as has come down to us seems to indicate that it was a sham at home and only laid off its disguise when abroad. (327)

Similarly, he declares that "George Wishington" objected to the Declaration of Independence because "he could not tell a lie" (329). The declaration announced the democracy it was founding as "the friend of all oppressed weak people, never their oppressor; it was never to steal a weak land nor its liberties; it was never to crush or betray struggling republics, but aid and encourage them with its sympathies," but "Wishington" recognized that "such a Declaration would prove a lie; that human nature was human nature, and that such a Declaration could not long survive in purity; that as soon as the Democracy was strong enough it would wipe its feet upon the Declaration and look around for something to steal" (329). This prediction did, of course, come true, and in it we can read Twain's criticism of the recent U.S. annexations of the Philippines, Guam, Cuba, Hawaii and Puerto Rico. These trespasses upon the liberties of other peoples "endeared it to the monarchies and despotisms, and admitted it to their society as a World Power. It lost its self-respect, but after a little ceased to be troubled by this detail" (329).

It was this march of so-called Progress that, the narrator argues, precipitated the Christian Science "eclipse":

> Christian Science did not create this eclipse unaided; it had abundant help—from natural and unavoidable evolutionary developments of the disease called Civilization. Within certain bounds and limits Civilization was a blessing; but the very forces which had brought it to that point were bound to carry it over the frontier sooner or later, and that is what happened. The law of its being was Progress, Advancement, and there was no power that could stop its march or even slacken its pace. With its own hands it opened the road and prepared the way for its destroyer. (333-4)

Science and commerce are once again implicated as collaborators in the gradual destruction of Western civilization. The "Eddypus" narrator lists the great figures of the Enlightenment and Scientific Revolutions, though he places Priestly, Newton, and Lyell in the same list as Vanderbilt and Edison—Bunsen, Bell, and Pasteur in the same list as Carnegie and Rockefeller—stating that "these relays wrought day and night at the Great Civilization and perfected it" (357). The subsequent burlesque of scientific history traces "Isaak Walton" and his discovery of gravitation to astronomy and the discovery of elements which "proved to be valuable" (365). He then tells of the formation of the first corporate trust,

> [T]he Heavenly Trust, for the exploring of the skies for new products, and placed in the hands of an experienced explorer, Henry M. Stanley. It was granted monopolistic powers: whenever it discovered a new product in the skies it could claim and hold the like product when found in the earth, no matter who found it nor upon whose premises it was discovered. The parent company worked the Milky Way personally, but sublet the outlying constellations to minor companies on a royalty. The profits were prodigious, and in ten years the small group of original incorporators came to be described by a word which was as new as anything they had found in the stars—billionaires. (365)

This history of the Heavenly Trust (a probable allegory for Standard Oil and US Steel) overlaps with Twain's central critique of Eddy, that she had made a fortune by copyrighting something that was originally the property of no one. Though Twain rejected the claim that Eddy had plagiarized *Science and Health* from Phineas Quimby, he saw her central accomplishment as her conversion of extant ideas about mental healing, ideas that had simply been "in the atmosphere" into something that could be packaged, copyrighted, and sold at a profit: "Whether she took it or invented it, it was—materially—a sawdust mine when she got it, and she has turned it into a Klondike" (*Christian* 102).

The "Eddypus" narrator does not interpret these collusions between scientific discovery and industry as intentional exploitations, but as a set of interactions that contribute to the creation of *circumstances*, circumstances which accumulate like a snowball rolling down a hill: "Every new thing begets another one; every new thing that is done moves many many minds to take up that thing and examine it, expand it, improve it, add to it, exploit it, perfect it. Each result of each effort breeds other efforts of other minds, and the original idea goes on growing, spreading, ramifying, and by small and hardly noticed degrees changing *conditions*" (379). Though the Scientific Revolution liberated the human mind, "the chains of thought lay broken; for the first time in the history of the race, men were free to think their own thoughts instead of other people's, and utter their conclusions without peril to body or estate," many of the products of that Revolution merely contributed to more oppression (380). The key example of that irony at work is the history of technology and American slavery: "For instance, at a certain time wise men were prophesying the early extinction of slavery in America and were forecasting the very date, with confidence. And they had their reasons, which were logically sound and mathematically sure: for slavery had ceased to pay" (381). The invention of techniques for processing cotton for clothing, improvements to the steam engine, and finally the creation of the cotton gin reinvigorated the slave trade by creating economic incentives:

> America had long ago been turning her cotton fields into cornfields because cotton was unprofitable; it was profitable, now, and she resumed its culture. … Slavery got a new impulse; the slave's price rose higher and higher, the demand for him grew more and more pressing; men began to *breed* him for the market, other men (pirates under the law) began to kidnap him in Africa and smuggle him into the country. (381)

And, most abominably of all, the narrator reports, American religion and culture rose up to celebrate and justify this new development: "Slavery was gratefully recognized by

press, pulpit and people, all over the land, as God's best gift to man, and the Prophecy which had once been so logically sound and mathematically sure drew the frayed remnants of its drapery about it and in sorrow lay down and died" (382). Nineteenth century slavery serves as that consummate example of religion, culture, science, technology, and commerce working together in the propagation of oppression and suffering on an unimaginable scale.

The voice of "Eddypus," like the voice of the antediluvian diaries, suffers no illusion that human history is a history of evolutionary progress or that Mary Baker Eddy and Christian Science represented a throwback to some earlier stage of human development. It argues, rather, that human history is not the product of "thought-out plan and purpose" but "logical and blind evolution … a tidal wave of accumulated accidents" (382). As such, human beings are not working together toward greater levels of enlightenment and freedom. Rather, the contingencies of history and the inability of human beings to reason their way out of the accumulation of circumstances contribute to a human society that is doomed to short-sightedness, prone to depicting evolutionary accident as the inevitable and desirable culmination of Progress. Instead of a throwback, Christian Science was merely a recurring player in the never-ending cycles of human history, an example of the human tendency to take an Idea that was the property of no one and turn it into product and profit and participate in the oppression of fellow human beings.

"ENVIRONMENT" AND THE HISTORICAL OBSERVER

As evidenced by his belief in the accidental nature of human evolution, Twain doubted the ability of any human being to understand his or her past, present, or future outside of his or her own narrow limitations. Throughout these grand, apocalyptic

pronouncements—which, from the twenty-first century perspective, occasionally sound contemporary enough to be prescient—Twain reminds us of the primacy of "environment" over and above objective, rational assessment in informing an individual's beliefs, alliances, and even perspective on history. Environment in *Christian Science* is similar to what Hank Morgan, protagonist of *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* would describe as "training":

> Training—training is everything; training is all there is *to* a person. We speak of nature; it is folly; there is no such thing as nature; what we call by that misleading name is merely heredity and training. We have no thoughts of our own, no opinions of our own; they are transmitted to us, trained into us. All that is original in us, and therefore fairly creditable or discreditable to us, can be covered up and hidden by the point of a cambric needle, all the rest being atoms contributed by, and inherited from, a procession of ancestors that stretches back a billion years to the Adam-clan or grasshopper or monkey from whom our race has been so tediously and ostentatiously and unprofitably developed. (177)

Morgan aspires to be one of those few who transcends his own training and enters the world with a mind unfettered, a truly rational actor in a world plagued with irrationality. Throughout the novel, he consistently seeks to level science and technology against the superstition and magic of the medieval peoples he encounters, yet the novel consistently reveals that goal to be quixotic. If we read Twain as logically consistent in his assertion that human evolution is the product of accident and that human beings are incapable of rationally assessing their historical circumstances beyond the limitations of environment or training, then his narrators—however superhumanly perceptive they may appear—are subject to the same limitations. When Huck says, "All right, then, I'll go to Hell," and decides not to turn in the runaway slave Jim, he is not offering an objection to the moral logic of slavery. He is declaring that he is about to do something he knows to be wrong: stealing someone's lawful property. In other words, he is speaking in a way that conforms perfectly to his training. Similarly, when Hank Morgan seeks to transform Medieval

England into a likeness of the late nineteenth century, he is not working uniformly toward the enlightenment and liberty of humankind but seeking to recreate his own environment in a different setting. And finally, the prophets of Twain's historical observers in the antediluvian diaries and "The Secret History of Eddypus" are inevitably limited by their own environments and their own training, and the author consistently calls attention to that fact.

The narrative voice of "Eddypus" purports to be the holder of the "true history" of his civilization, a lone heretic, bearer of the truths that threaten to overturn the global despotism of Christian Science. As he responds to his interlocutor when asked to write a history of Eddypus, "You mean a real history, of course? Not the ruck of pious romances which the Government calls history and compels the nations to buy—every family has a set, along with Science and Health" (322). Yet almost instantaneously, we are shown that the history he possesses is monstrously and hilariously inaccurate, a nearly incoherent hodgepodge based on half-remembered facts and misunderstandings. On the very first page, the narrator informs his friend that this secret history was gotten from "a paper by one Mark Twain, (A.D. 1898 = A.M. 30) a revered priest of the earlier faith, sometime Bishop of New Jersey, hanged in A.D. 1912 = A.M. 47" (318-9). [88] In this history, Uncle Remus is "celebrated as a daring voyager and explorer of in his time. He was with Columbus in the Mayflower and assisted him in discovering America and Livingston" (319). Livingston, he informs us, "was an island" (319). Yellow journalism was invented by Ralph Waldo Edison, and Sir Walter Raleigh "settled Plymouth Rock, but was driven away by the Puritans and other Indians; after which he discarded armed force, and honorably brought a great tract of land and named it Pennsylvania, after himself" (327).

[88] *Anno Mundi*, "Year of the World," the reckoning of time that begins with the discovery of Christian Science.

In other words, throughout this narrator's incisive pronouncements about the state of the world at the turn of the twentieth century, we are reminded that his historical perspective is contaminated, limited by the availability of information, distortions in the record, and his own prejudices.

As such, in a very real way, this narrator is guilty—though unknowingly so—of the same sins of omission and revision that he accuses the Church of deliberately committing. He even acknowledges that in some way, his history is a creative work, a fabrication. Though he accuses the regime of supplying "pious romances" instead of history, he describes his own project in artistic terms, saying that "in my clandestine trade of antiquary and student of history I am like an artist who paints beautiful pictures and hungers for the happiness of showing them, but lives among the blind" (322). Thus, history becomes artifice as it undertakes the responsibility of conveying truth to people incapable of perceiving it, just as in *Connecticut Yankee*, the science that Hank Morgan uses to combat the superstitions of King Arthur's Court becomes, in the words of Michael Davitt Bell, another form of "magic, a matter of deceptive and spellbinding effects" (62).[89] The more one tries to deny the effects of one's own training and environment, the more one becomes like Merlin, "an old numbskull, a magician who believed his own magic; and no magician can thrive who is handicapped like that" (*Connecticut*, 224).

The paradigmatic episode in *Connecticut Yankee* that demonstrates this slippage between science and magic takes place at the Valley of Holiness, a pilgrimage site in Twain's Arthurian England. In this episode, Morgan "fixes" a sacred well by setting off

[89] Bell argues that through this central irony, "Twain brilliantly (however unwittingly and unconsciously) dramatizes what is already a fundamental instability in William Dean Howells's version of literary realism. For what is Howellsian realism, after all, but a lie that claims to be truthful, a form of literature that claims *not* to be 'literary,' a deployment of style that claims to *avoid* 'style"'—a species of magic, in short, that justifies itself as a righteous battle *against* magic" (66)

fireworks (having already sealed up the leak in secret) in order to show up Merlin and secure his place as the King's favored advisor. The restoration of the well, achieved by using technology to pander to superstition, gives Morgan further credibility and power in Arthurian England and is a pragmatic means to Morgan's ultimate end of transforming that world—plagued as it is with economic injustice—into a likeness of his own, a world that he describes as rational and humane. Yet, as Lydia Cooper notes, "the novel troubles these simplistic assumptions about historical meliorism. From the beginning, Hank desires democratic reform, not as an end in itself, but rather, as a means he employs towards *his* goal," which is, in Morgan's own words, "to boss the whole country inside of three months" (Cooper 70, Twain 30). Morgan believes that his liberal attitudes—his belief in a free press, separation of church and state, religious pluralism, and individual autonomy—endow him with more refined moral and ethical sensibilities than those around him and fit him for the role of essentially "liberating" Camelot by force. Yet as Christopher Morris notes, *Connecticut Yankee* can be read as a critique of the Enlightenment and the liberal tradition, "exploring the links between pre-modern Europe and its accelerated grimace, 'America'" (Morris 161). By trying to quell the violence of the sixth century, Morgan instantiates yet another form of violence. The Valley of Holiness episode demonstrates that Morgan, as the lone voice of democratic and liberal reform in Camelot, must resort to the same coercive and authoritarian displays as the nobles and church leaders he reviles. In order to liberate the people, he must first dominate them. As Morgan himself states:

> Unlimited power *is* the ideal thing when it is in safe hands. The despotism of heaven is the one absolutely perfect government. An earthly despotism would be the absolutely perfect earthly government, if the conditions were the same, namely, the despot the perfectest individual of the human race. … My works showed what a despot could do with the resources of a kingdom at his command. Unsuspected by this dark land, I had the

> civilization of the nineteenth century booming under its very nose! (Twain, *Connecticut* 96-7)

Yet, as Morris also notes, that civilization is an extension of Morgan's self, a model society that reflects Morgan's preferences and eccentricities: "Morgan employs irony everywhere to protect himself and to extend, imperialistically, his power and ideologies" (Morris 163). Morgan values freedom of religion, but as a New England Protestant, his definition of religious freedom is a society in which "everybody could be any kind of a Christian he wanted to" (Twain 96). Morgan decries the arbitrary violence of Morgan Le Fay's court, where individuals are imprisoned in order to allow nobles to save face or merely to satisfy the fleeting whims of the lady of the castle, but Morgan laughingly sends the band at a feast to the dungeon for playing poorly.

We are never allowed to forget that Morgan's violent final stand against the institutions of the sixth century is as much about self-preservation as it is about ideals, and the honor of that stand is called into question when one considers that through the power of technology, Morgan and his band of fifty-two inflict casualties in the tens of thousands. Surveying the carnage, Morgan declares: "As to the destruction of life, it was amazing. Moreover, it was beyond estimate. Of course we could not *count* the dead, because they did not exist as individuals, but merely as homogeneous protoplasm, with alloys of iron and buttons" (452). Though *Connecticut Yankee* is often read as a kind of allegory of relations between the North and the Sir Walter Scott-plagued South, it is also, in many ways, an allegory of modern "benevolent" imperialism aided and abetted by the machinery of modern warfare.

At other points, we are reminded of the violence and inequality of the sort of industrialism Morgan touts as the modern ideal. There is a subtle dig at the mining industry, which Morgan endeavors to "reform": "All mines were royal property, and there were a good many of them. They had formerly been worked as savages always

works mines—holes grubbed in the earth and the mineral brought up in sacks of hide by hand, at the rate of a ton a day; but I had begun to put the mining on a scientific basis as early as I could" (96). That appeal to science is more rhetorical than descriptive of any observable change in working conditions. In fact, the meaning of Morgan's industrial reforms for the daily lives of ordinary people remains abstract and theoretical. Like a public relations officer trying to obfuscate inspectors, Morgan refuses us access to his mines and the floors of his factories, and instead appeals to abstract notions of freedom and self-determination. He tellingly calls his entire system of education and production a "man-factory." Yet the liberated individuals this system is designed to manufacture are rarely ever seen in the novel. Clarence, implicated as he is in the managerial structure of Morgan's Camelot, would seem to be the exception that proves the rule. Otherwise, the beneficiaries of that stewardship remain out of sight, enabling Morgan's ventures as invisibly as the serfs support the aristocracy and conveniently disappearing when it is time for Morgan to literally blow his factories up.

Through his unreliable narrator in *Connecticut Yankee* and "The Secret History of Eddypus," Twain calls his own project into question. As Morris says of *Connecticut Yankee,* "It does not take Paul de Man to understand Twain's work as allegorizing hermeneutic self-deception in reading and writing" (Morris 160). At various points in "Eddypus," Twain satirizes himself by having the narrator do to his own work what he so gleefully did to the work of others. There is a remarkable point when the erstwhile historian takes the Bishop Mark Twain to task for lacking a sense of humor and dissects the absurdities of his aphorisms in the manner in which Twain himself would lampoon the writings of Mary Baker Eddy and James Fennimore Cooper. The scholar claims that the improvements he makes to Twain's prose prove "that the little book has merit, and

that my labors in relieving that merit of its obscuring and obstructing cloud of defects were worth the fatigue those labors imposed upon me" (341). At this point, Twain seems to be deliberately poking fun at the sections of *Christian Science* in which he dissects the prose of Mary Baker Eddy's manuscripts (*Science and Health* was often referred to as "the little book") in order to liberate the "merit" of her essential ideas from the obfuscation of her prose. At the very least, he seems to be reflecting on the limited ability of any author to control the way in which he or she is received, a poignant reflection for a man who was, at the time, thinking about his autobiography and contemplating his own legacy. The autobiography, and his scheme for delaying its publication a century after his death (this present moment, in fact), appears in "Eddypus." The historian declares that this scheme, which was meant to protect the sensibilities of his friends and family, "made his pen the freest that ever wrote. As a result, his friends stand before us absolutely naked. They had not a grace that does not appear, they had not a deformity that is not present to the eye" (342). The autobiographer, however, "was intending to wear clothes himself, and as constantly as he could he did; but many and many is the time that they slipped and fell in a pile on the floor when he was not noticing" (342). The historian claims that through these unintentional slippages, we can come to "know him better than he knew himself," a statement which rings both true and false, since the "Eddypus" narrator is so egregiously wrong about the facts of Twain's life and work. Twain appears to be contemplating the fact that though historical distance may protect the immediate subjects of a work, the trade-off is loss of comprehension. The narrator tells us that "[Twain] thought he would put off publication a thousand years, but he gave up that idea because he wanted his book to be readable by the common people without necessity of translation. 'The epic of Beowulf is twelve hundred years old,' he says; 'it is English, but I cannot read a line of it, so great is the change our tongue has undergone'" (343). Thus,

"Eddypus" turns from a serio-comic look at the consequences of unchecked power to a contemplation of the inadequacies of cultural memory and the ways in which historical actors and the circumstances that surround them become, through language and other alterations in environment, simultaneously revealed in ways they could not have predicted or intended and completely unintelligible.

CONCLUSION

When Hank Morgan sets out to build his "Man Factory," a nineteenth-century style educational system designed to correct the effects of sixth century "training," he is, in many ways, as naïve as those who expected Christian Science to be eradicated by getting a judge to state once and for all that Mary Baker Eddy was a fraud. And just as Morgan essentially takes on the most violent and hypocritical aspects of the same chivalry he sets out to combat, so Peabody and those who rallied around them found themselves allied with an outrageous religious enthusiast in the process of combating another religious enthusiast. Given the ways in which Twain seemed to cut through much of the nonsense surrounding these debates, it is tempting to simply see him as being above it all. Yet there are no grounds for claiming that Twain always saw the impact of Mary Baker Eddy with the proper sense of proportion. As those who look at these writings in biographical context do well to point out, Twain's response to Christian Science is the writing of a man who, as William Macnaughton suggests, saw Eddy as a successful rival at a time when he was struggling professionally and financially. It is also the writing of a grieving father and husband.

Unlike many of those critics, however, I do not find Twain's writings about Christian Science to be incoherent or unreadable. Rather, Twain was responding quite coherently to ongoing public debates about the problem represented by Christian

Science—the conflict between modernity and religion—and how right-thinking people ought to combat it. He responded by placing Christian Science within his own understanding of human nature and history, using Christian Science as an occasion to develop ideas that had been developing over the course of a career.[90]

[90] In fact, Twain was already poking fun at the problems with historical memory in *The Innocents Abroad*, where he contemplates "What may be left of General Grant's great name forty centuries hence … This—in the Encyclopedia for A.D. 5868, possibly: 'Uriah S. (or Z.) Graunt—popular poet of ancient times in the Aztec provinces of the United States of British America. Some authors say flourished about A.D. 742; but the learned Ah-ah Foo-foo states that he was a cotemporary of Scharkspyre, the English poet, and flourished about A.D. 1328, some three centuries *after* the Trojan war instead of before it. He wrote "Rock me to Sleep, Mother."' These thoughts sadden me. I will to bed" (336). He also frequently comments on the embellishments of travelogues of the Holy Land: "I am sure, from the tenor of books I have read, that many who have visited this land in years gone by, were Presbyterians, and came seeking evidences in support of their particular creed; they found a Presbyterian Palestine, and they had already made up their minds to find no other, though possibly they did not know it, being blinded by their zeal. Others were Baptists, seeking Baptist evidences and a Baptist Palestine. Others were Catholics, Methodists, Episcopalians, seeking evidences indorsing their several creeds, and a Catholic, a Methodist, an Episcopalian Palestine" (511).

CHAPTER FOUR—The Standard Oil Treatment: Willa Cather, Georgine Milmine, and the Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy

It will be a great historical series, as great, perhaps, as the history of the Standard Oil, and to most people more interesting. It is not an attack on Christian Science, as most magazine articles have been. It is the history of a remarkable woman and a remarkable movement.
--"The Life of Mrs. Eddy," McClure's *advertisement*

Those who were disappointed in Mark Twain's enigmatic contribution to the Christian Science debates turned just a few years later to another publication for a definitive, unequivocal debunking of the movement's claims. In 1907, *McClure's* magazine commenced serial publication of *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy and the History of Christian Science* by a young journalist named Georgine Milmine. The immediate public reaction to this announcement suggests that many readers hostile to Mrs. Eddy thought it would be just the ticket. Though advance ads for the series consistently promised that "It is not an attack on Christian Science," but would be based on the very highest standards of evidence, the ubiquitous comparison of this new project to Ida Tarbell's 1904 exposure of Standard Oil was no accident ("Life of Mrs. Eddy"). *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy* was an exposé, an attempt to pin down Eddy's fundamental dishonesty—even madness—and reveal the corruption at the heart of her enterprise. As one reader wrote to S.S. McClure after the publication of the first installment, "As the Standard Oil is the worst monopoly in the commercial world, so is 'Christian Science' the greatest, most criminal fraud in the religious field" (Adams, 12 January 1907). The magazine's desire to slake its audience's thirst for condemnation was always in tension with its claims about the objective, empirical nature of the research. Georgine Milmine, one ad said, "has worked on it steadily for more than two years, gathering data, and five of the members of the McClure staff have helped to confirm and

fill out her results" ("Life of Mrs. Eddy"). And among those members of the magazine staff were some of the most noteworthy names in American journalism: Ida Tarbell herself before she left the magazine in 1906, Burton J. Hendrick, future Pulitzer Prize winner, and Willa Sibert Cather, who had just taken the job at *McClure's* following the success of her early short stories.

Critical curiosity about this biography—which was published in a scholarly edition by the University of Nebraska in 1993—has centered on Cather's role. Indeed, for the past thirty years, scholarly consensus has held that Cather is the true author of the series. The editors of the Nebraska edition were so confident of this fact that they printed Cather's name first and Milmine's name second, declaring in the introduction and in bold-face print on the back cover, "Willa Cather is indisputably the principal author of *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy and the History of Christian Science*" (xvii). Newly available evidence at the Mary Baker Eddy Library suggests that it is time to re-evaluate that consensus. It was, at bottom, a collaborative work, though critical preoccupation with the question of who deserves to be listed first (or listed at all) on the spine of the book, has obscured that central fact of its production. Furthermore, the resultant habit of reading *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy* within a single-author framework has precluded some far more interesting possibilities for critical inquiry into a rich symptomatic text. This article will present the documentary evidence against Cather's sole or primary authorship and reconstruct both the circumstances of the text's production and the cultural context that such a narrative uncovers.

DOCUMENTARY ISSUES AND THE QUESTION OF AUTHORSHIP

Rumors about Cather's role in writing *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy* circulated throughout the decades following its original publication. Once Willa Cather achieved a

national reputation as a novelist—winning a Pulitzer Prize for *One of Ours* in 1922—admirers began speculating that she was the true author of the *McClure's* series that had served as the basis for the many subsequent attempts to write the biography of Mary Baker Eddy. In a 1933 issue of the *New Yorker*, Alexander Woolcott stated that he had it on good authority that "the devastating serial published in *McClure's* under the name of Georgine Milmine in the brave days of 1906—were not actually written by Miss Milmine at all. Instead, a re-write job based on the manuscript of her researches was assigned to a minor member of the *McClure* staff who has since made quite a name for herself in American letters. That name is Willa Cather" ("A Well Known Ghost"). Cather herself repeatedly denied such claims, stating that her role had been merely editorial. And indeed, a newsletter for a local Boston bookshop stated that while

> We also have it on almost if not quite the best authority that Mr. Woolcott's revelation rests on fact … it is possible that the amount of work done by Miss Cather has been ever so slightly over-estimated. Hers was, as Mr. Woolcott says, a re-write job. But as far as we know, Miss Milmine did more than enough to justify the appearance of her name on the final page of the book. ("A Well Known Ghost")

Since 1982, Cather scholars have been making a much more enthusiastic case for viewing both the magazine series and the book as part of Cather's opus. In an article for *American Literature*, Brent Bohlke presented a newly unearthed letter from Cather to Edwin Anderson, dated November 24, 1922, which seemed to imply that Cather's role was much larger than she had previously let on. Indeed, there are fourteen letters written by Cather that refer to the Christian Science project. Most contain flat denials that she was actually the author of the series, continually reassuring her correspondents that Georgine Milmine was, in fact, a real person and that her own role was purely editorial. The Anderson letter contains a much more detailed account—couched in repeated requests for confidentiality—and states that the Eddy materials were purchased from

Milmine by McClure but that Milmine was not capable of producing a publishable manuscript. A group of editors were assigned to the project, and a sort of contest was held to determine which was most capable of writing the final series. While Burton Hendrick wrote the first two issues, McClure ultimately assigned Cather to the rest of the project due to the potentially libelous nature of Hendrick's installments (Cather, 24 November 1922). Based on this letter, Bohlke claims that Milmine "was in the interesting and rather embarrassing situation of being listed as author of a book of which she did not write a single word" (292). He also calls for "a more comprehensive and systematic study of the entire work" (293).

The University of Nebraska edition, edited by David Stouck, moves from Bohlke's original argument to the more grandiose claim for Cather's principal authorship. He builds his case on the same letter that Bohlke presented as well as draft copies of the biography, which were then housed at the Mary Baker Eddy Archives and Library of The First Church of Christ, Scientist. Stouck states that the document in question is "the manuscript of the 'Milmine' book" and that "Willa Cather's editing is evident on its pages. Cather's handwriting is not only identifiable in edits for the typesetter but in notes on separate pages that continue to query such matters as church membership, the importance of *The Christian Science Journal*, etc" (xvii).[91] Bohlke and Stouck are the basis for all critical engagement with the biography since and have become mandatory citations for any published work that even mentions it.[92] The archives of the Mother

[91]Immediately subsequent to the publication of this edition, Judy Huenneke, then a researcher in the Mother Church's archives, now one of the head archivists at the Mary Baker Eddy Library, presented an unpublished conference paper by invitation on the question of Cather's involvement. Huenneke's assessment of the documentary evidence was much less enthusiastic than Stouck's, but she indicates that "only recently has it come to light that a Milmine manuscript in our collections may contain significant evidence of Cather's editing process during those early years. This will be a subject for future research."

[92] The most extensive analysis of the biography under the assumption that Cather is the primary author is by David Porter in *On the Divide,* p. 70-83 and "From Violence to Art." Janis P. Stout declares the fact of

Church have since been relocated to the same complex that houses the *Christian Science Monitor* and transformed into a professional research library. In 2011, the Milmine file was newly curated and made available to outside researchers for the first time in over a decade, and the evidence contained therein indicates that the case for Cather as primary author of the *McClure's* series was premature and based on a rather wishful and incomplete reading of the documentary evidence.

Let us begin with the Anderson letter, which Bohlke read in 1982 under the assumption that Cather was hiding something when, in thirteen other letters, she insisted that her role in the project was purely editorial. Indeed, as James Woodress states in his biography of Cather, the novelist had a tendency to self-mythologize: "she altered details of her life; she exaggerated many events; she revised her opinions. She made no effort to be accurate in recalling facts, and it is hard to tell where the reality leaves off and the fiction begins" (2). Bohlke and virtually all subsequent scholars to confront this biography have always assumed that the letter to Anderson was the "real" story, that in the thirteen other letters on the Eddy project, Cather was being disingenuous and underselling her role. But further context is provided by a January 13, 1933 letter from Lyman Powell to Lucia C. Warren, Corresponding Secretary for the Christian Science Board of Directors. Powell was an Episcopal minister who wrote his own book on Christian Science in 1907 and consulted heavily with Milmine, Cather, and other principals involved in research for the Milmine series during that time. Powell also reports briefly living as a neighbor to Cather in New York City in 1912 and wrote to

---

Cather's authorship to be well established in "Between Candor and Concealment." For more examples, see Downs 116-125; Zitter; and Urgo 42. Scholars outside the field of Cather research frequently cite Bohlke and Stouck in mentions of the biography as well. Gill cites them in her appendix on the *McClure's* biography, and though she consistently refers to Milmine in mentions of the series. She indicates that she accepts their interpretation of the letter to Anderson but qualifies that acceptance by acknowledging Cather's repeated denials and the probably that "she would not have been pleased to see her name at the head of the Nebraska edition" (567). For other examples, see Shelden 68-9; Jenkins 57-8; and Putney 251n48-49.

Warren in 1922 specifically to help clear up the authorship question. His version, he claims, is based on correspondence with Milmine, Cather, and "Cameron McKenzie, then Editor of McClure's Magazine and later Mr. McClure's son-in-law" (Powell, 13 January 1933). Powell describes Georgine Milmine as a "young Canadian newspaper woman who was impressed by the great popularity of such work as Ida Tarbell had done a few years before, as she told me in her home in Auburn, New York . . . one day in April 1907" (Powell, 13 January 1933). At the time of their meeting, she had just recently been married to Mr. Benjamin Welles, a local newspaper editor. According to Powell, Milmine spent years gathering information on Eddy, staying "long enough in a place to get naturally reticent New England people to talk freely to her, and then with her trained newspaper mind she put what she learned from them often into the form of affidavits, to which in most cases those she met readily subscribed" (Powell, 13 January 1933). In 1906, Milmine submitted a manuscript "in magazine story form" to *McClure's*, and the terms of the magazine's purchase "as I learned from several representatives of the magazine" stipulated "that the magazine would send its own staff to check up on the materials and to revise and edit in conformity with the McClure's policy, as today the American Magazine has its own staff—sometimes calling in young newspaper men like my son Talcott—to check up and re-write stories already accepted and paid for, in conformity with the magazine policy" (Powell, 13 January 1933). Powell states that Milmine herself told him that Cather

> [W]as given the special responsibility, without use of her name, for going over the story and materials of Georgine Milmine. She was assisted, however, by a friend of hers with whom she had—I believe—taught a while before in the high school in Pittsburgh or Alleghany, Pennsylvania, and the two of them lived together for a year or two in apartments at 66 Chestnut Street, Boston, where I had the pleasure of going over the whole matter with them. In one of her many letters to me Miss Cather refers to the investigating she and her friend were doing of Miss Milmine's

> witnesses, and says: "We have today investigated all of them." (Powell, 13 January 1933)

He refers also to the work of Burton Hendrick, who, in addition to writing the first two installments, evidently went to Belfast to further investigate the issue of Eddy's indebtedness to her mentor, Phineas Parkhurst Quimby, an "impression" that Powell got from George A. Quimby himself, the late mental healer's son. On the final question of Cather's degree of responsibility for the final version of the series, Powell says the following:

> All this time the many letters I have on file from Miss Cather indicate that she was head of the revising enterprise and was interviewing many of the people; but her name nowhere appears for two reasons:
>
> 1) She was acting essentially as "re-write" editor.
>
> 2) All these years Miss Cather was scrupulously protecting herself from being identified with special research or debunking writing because she was preparing for her permanent work as a story writer; and when Mrs. Powell and the boys and I were spending a few months in New York in 1912, we found Miss Cather had swung completely over to her story writing and was living and working in the same apartment house with us, just off Washington Square, evidently finishing the first story, entitled "Alexander's Bridge" that marked her final breakoff with the official magazine editing. (Powell, 13 January 1933).

While Powell does indicate that Milmine's original manuscript was revised by a team of editors led by Cather, he gives Milmine far more credit than recent accounts of the arrangement have allowed. For one thing, he refers to Milmine as a journalist in her own right rather than merely, as Bohlke ungenerously dubs her, "the wife of a journalist" (289). In fact, it is clear from Powell's account and from numerous other documents in the Milmine file that she was a trained and working journalist before she married Benjamin Welles. (Bohlke also incorrectly calls her "Mrs. Milmine"). While it is certainly possible that, as Stouck states, "Miss Milmine knew that she did not have the technical skills to write the biography," Powell provides further context for this supposed

appropriation of Milmine's work by the editors of *McClure's* (xvii). He indicates, in fact, that this was standard operating procedure for dealing with manuscripts bought on spec—not only at *McClure's*, but at other journalistic outlets of public repute—not an artifact of Milmine's particular incompetence.

The strongest evidence for Cather as "re-write editor" or supervisor rather than "primary author" comes from the drafts themselves. In the footnotes to the introduction to the Nebraska edition, Stouck indicates that he himself did not actually examine these documents, which at that point had not even been fully cataloged by the researchers at the Mother Church archives. Instead, he relied upon Kevin Synnott of Russell Sage College, who

> [E]xamined the 'Milmine Collection' in the Mary Baker Eddy Archives and Library and found three different sets of manuscripts related to the biography. The first, dated at New York 1904, consist of 127 half-pages of typescript signed by Georgine Milmine and appears to represent an early attempt on her part write the biography. The second, a carbon of a typescript for the book, consists of 414 pages with edits by both Milmine and Cather. The third consists of two copies of partial manuscripts with edits by Georgine Milmine. There are no manuscripts or typescripts for the *McClure's* articles. (xxvii-xxviii)

I am unable to ascertain how Synott and through him Stouck came to these conclusions, which are—not to put too fine a point on it—quite simply wrong. To be fair, access to the Mother Church archives was notoriously difficult to get prior to the opening of the new research library in 2002, but it seems fairly clear to me that the claims of these two scholars were hasty and not, evidently, supported by the church's own archivists, who have little stake in this particular authorship question (their concerns about the biography are of a much broader scope). Having conducted a painstaking examination of the drafts housed in the Milmine file and having consulted with the staff, I have identified the following problems with Stouck's representation of these documents.

First, there is the question of the handwriting. Though Stouck represents Synnott as absolutely certain that Cather's handwriting is present on the long, 414-page typescript, the archivist responsible for curating this file and creating the new finding aid was far less certain and indicated that which—if any—of the marginalia were Cather's was something of an open question for her. Armed with samples of Cather and Milmine's handwriting, I examined the drafts and found nothing that resembled Cather's distinctive—and famously illegible—script. Most of the handwriting was consistent with Milmine, whose signature appears on the final page. I am reasonably certain, therefore, that the vast majority—even the entirety—of the editorial notations were made by Milmine.

Secondly, Stouck is incorrect in his claim that this is a typescript of the book, which was revised and published after the original article series. The draft he mentions is quite different from both the article series and the final book version in the way that pretty much all early drafts are different from the final form of a work. The basic organizational structure is there (some chapter breaks and titles are even the same, but certainly not all), as are certain memorable quotes from important sources. The beginnings of arguments about controversial matters that would later inform the biography's central thesis are clearly present, and some distinctive diction did apparently make it from this draft to the finished product. The prose is pedestrian, and the density of facts and quotations—which include lengthy transcriptions from *Science and Health* and other primary sources—make for cumbersome reading, so it is clear than an editorial hand was needed, but the foundation of the articles is essentially present. The handwritten marginalia consists primarily of insertions based on developing research in addition to copyediting marks. If this were a draft that Cather or anyone else on the *McClure's* editorial staff had marked up in late 1906 or 1907, one would expect it to be much further

along, to see evidence, at least, that this was moving toward the form that appears in *McClure's* and the book. It is most certainly incorrect to state, as Stouck does, that these were "edits for the typesetter" (xvii).

Thirdly, while this draft is not dated, it is abundantly clear that it was produced well before Cather arrived on the scene. In Chapter 29 of the typescript, the author discusses the annual pilgrimages that Christian Scientists made to Mary Baker Eddy's home in Pleasant View and states that "last year's pilgrimage" occurred on Monday, June 13. "1904" is penciled in above the sentence, and June 13, 1904 did, in fact, occur on a Monday. This would place the date of this typescript's original production in 1905. Cather did not arrive at *McClure's* until late in 1906 and did not take over as lead editor of the Eddy project until the December 1906 and January 1907 articles had already gone to print. It is inconceivable that Cather would have been marking up a draft that still contained such rudimentary versions of the two installments that had already been revised for publication. In fact, the first two installments of the series, which are based on Chapters 1 through 5 of this draft,[93] indicate that the document underwent multiple drastic revisions before appearing in print. Finally, both the articles and the book version of the biography are remarkably up to date in the information they present. In fact, new material was added to the book version in order to reflect the current state of the Christian Science organization and new information uncovered since the publication of the magazine series. The draft in question cites no sources dated later than 1904, and the

[93] A point of clarification may be warranted here. Many scholars who mention this biography tend to ignore the fact that the format of the original *McClure's* articles and the book on which the Nebraska edition is based are somewhat different, so there is a bit of confusion about where Cather entered the picture. Cather and other independent sources state that she began her work with the February edition, the second installment of the main part of the series, but the *third* part if one includes the introductory article that appeared in December 1906, which is *not* included in the book. The January 1907 installment, however, encompasses the material in Chapters I and II of the book. Therefore, Cather's editorship begins with Chapter III in the Nebraska edition, and the noticeable shift in tone bears this out.

author's description of, for example, the status of Augusta Stetson in the Christian Science organization—which was tenuous in the second half of that decade—suggests that 1905 is a perfectly believable date for this document. It seems reasonable to assume that while the bones of the biography are present in this typescript, there were many intermediate drafts between this document and the version that went to print.

Fourth, there is the relationship of this draft to the shorter draft also signed by Milmine and dated 1904.[94] When the two drafts are laid side by side, it is immediately clear that the short 1904 draft was the basis for the long draft. In fact, the short draft reads very much like a condensed version of the long draft or like an early attempt by Milmine to lay down a basic framework which she then fleshed out over time. In fact, outlines and handwritten sketches of chapters in the collection suggest that this was her process, to get the basic facts down in narrative form and then add interpretation as her research developed. One handwritten sketch of the first chapter uses the same structure and diction as the introduction to the long draft, and paragraphs from her handwritten interview notes appear to have been transcribed almost verbatim into these early drafts.

The conclusion that the 414-page draft was, in fact, an early draft produced by Milmine also fits with the chronology that appears in internal letters circulated among members of the Christian Science Board of Directors, who got wind of the project in the summer of 1905. Board members, particularly Frank H. Sprague, Alfred Farlow, and Harold Wilson maintained close contact with the editors and partners at *McClure's* (until *McClure's* essentially severed contact with them in 1907) as the project developed, and

---

[94] The file also contains various undated draft fragments with either no or very minimal handwritten marginalia. One fragment, which consists of pages from the earliest and latest chapters appears to be contemporaneous with the long draft. The similarities and appearance of certain edits that were handwritten into the long draft suggest that it may be an edited version of that document. Another very short fragment from the Quimby section is pretty close in prose style and format to what appears in the *McClure's* articles (including section headers that do not appear in the earlier drafts) but contains material that evidently did not make the final cut.

though their understanding of the circumstances was shaped, in part, by rumor—exacerbated by internal conflicts among the editors and partners of the magazine and publishing company—some interesting details emerge from their consultations with people in the know.

On July 15, 1905, Sprague reported to Farlow on a meeting with a Mr. Lord, who indicated that the series would "appear in a prospectus for 1906," that "[t]hey have already been prepared and accepted" (Sprague, 15 July 1905). Though he did not know her name, he describes Georgine Milmine thus:

> They were written by a woman (the name was not divulged) who is interested in studying matters of public concern, and who, in this vein, conceived the idea of "writing up" the subject of Christian Science, as it seemed to her to offer a good field for the exercise of her genius. With this end in view she appealed to Miss Tarbell (at present on the editorial staff of McClure's).At first Miss Tarbell doubted her ability to cope with the subject, but finally consented to let her submit a specimen of the kind of presentation she proposed to give.This proved acceptable, and she was detailed to investiate [sic] the matter and write a series of articles, to be published later in book form. (Sprague, 15 July 1905)

An October 1905 letter from Alfred Farlow reported that Harold Wilson, one of Eddy's secretaries, had spoken to Milmine twice, and that she "has already submitted two articles to *McClure's* and they have rejected them, without doubt due to the pressure which has been brought to bear upon them" (Farlow, 19 October 1905). At the time, Farlow and Wilson, who consulted regularly with John Sanborn Phillips, junior partner of McClure & Phillips Publishing Co., were relatively certain that the proposed series would never see the light of day, though this evidently had as much to do with disagreements among McClure, Phillips, and Ray Stannard Baker as it did with Milmine's skills as a journalist and a writer. (McClure was heartily in favor of publishing the series, Phillips ambivalent, and Baker vehemently opposed to criticizing a religious group). As of December 23, 1905, Phillips wrote to Mr. Sisson: "'Let me say that it is very unlikely that we shall use

Miss Milmine's stuff; perhaps we shall never use any material relating to the subject.' Signed, John S. Phillips" (Farlow, n.d.). In other words, throughout 1905, Milmine was in the process of attempting to write the series in a way that would be acceptable to the magazine editors, and the drafts in the Milmine Collection seem to be a pretty fair representation of that effort. Furthermore, it is clear that Milmine's efforts were plagued both by her own inexperience and by the internal conflicts at *McClure's*, which resulted, in 1906, with the departure of Phillips, Tarbell, Sisson, Baker, and Lincoln Steffins, all of whom went on to create *The American Magazine*.

While the primary evidence deprives us of the opportunity to honestly claim *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy* as an early Cather work, those same materials have opened up the rich, complex narrative of the production and dissemination of this fascinating, symptomatic text. In addition to telling us much about the complexity of the debates that surrounded Christian Science, this text functions as a window on American culture at the turn of the twentieth century. Proper attention to it outside of the realm of single-author concerns yields rewards for anyone interested in early twentieth century print culture, literary realism, the history of American religion and science, the history of American journalism, the public role of women, the growth of industrial capitalism and anti-monopolistic reform movements, the professionalization of medicine, early psychology, pragmatic philosophy, and the fractures produced by a pluralistic society.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF COLLABORATIVE AUTHORSHIP

A more balanced perspective on this biography requires a more capacious understanding of authorship, particularly considering the material conditions under which it was produced. Rather than looking at this problem as a question of which individual effectively "owns" the text, it is far more productive—indeed far more accurate—to look

at *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy* as the product of collaboration. According to Amy Ahearn, whose extensive primary research into the McClure archives at Indiana University's Lilly Library sheds light on the nature of authorship at the magazine, S.S. McClure relied extensively on a staff of editors and ghostwriters in the production of the biographical and autobiographical series that helped make *McClure's* a household name. In addition to his contributions to the muckraking genre, McClure introduced new definitions of editorship to American journalism, advancing the model of the "active" or "intervening" editor in place of the dominant model of the "more established, elitist journals," which "cultivated 'armchair editors,' those men (and they were almost always men) who waited for articles to be mailed in—the editor's job, primarily a passive one, to read and find pieces for publication" (5). S. S. McClure clearly thought of editing as a form of genius in its own right: "Tellingly, he referred to his staff interchangeably as 'writers' and 'editors.' Although these terms did not have the same meaning, they were closely related. Given his own high opinion of editing—that it, in its best form, represented the mind of a genius—he obviously valued his staff members" (26). Furthermore, letters between S.S. McClure and prominent Christian Scientist John V. Dittemore indicate that McClure frequently used the first person when describing the Eddy series. Editorial practice at *McClure's* and other American magazines was evolving

> [O]rganizational structures that depended on multi-authorship. The process of publishing an article demanded collaborative, if sometimes unequal, contributors, including reporters, researchers, writers, staffers, stenographers, editors, and layout personnel. With manuscripts passing through so many hands, "authorship" became a slippery category, as did "ownership." (5)

In the remainder of this chapter, I will use the primary evidence to flesh out the collaborative process that brought *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy* into being, examining Ida Tarbell's role as inspiration for the series as well as purchaser of the story on behalf of

the magazine, Georgine Milmine's efforts to research Eddy's life over the course of two years and turn her vast collection of notes into a compelling narrative, Burton Hendrick's brief and controversial turn as editor of the series, and Willa Cather's role both as editor from early 1907 through 1908 and as a public face of sorts for the project, and finally the influence exerted by S.S. McClure, whose interventionist editorial and managerial style and behind-the-scenes negotiations shaped what came to print. Through that reconstruction, a complex narrative emerges that helps explain why giving the Standard Oil treatment to Christian Science, making a Rockefeller of Mary Baker Eddy seemed like a profitable and necessary enterprise for *McClure's* and hints at the reasons why Eddy and her movement captured the imaginations of some of the most prominent men and women of letters of the early twentieth century.

Ida Tarbell

Though Ida Tarbell left *McClure's* in 1906 at a point when the Eddy series had been, for all practical purposes, shelved, her pioneering role in investigative journalism and biographical writing for the magazine is essential to understanding the shape *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy* eventually took and the cultural work it was expected to perform. As Lyman Powell states, Tarbell, in addition to buying the story from Georgine Milmine, functioned as Milmine's muse. Equipped with a brilliant intellect and a passion for social justice, Tarbell joined the magazine in 1892 and achieved a reputation for rewriting and editing the biographical series that became a central to the *McClure's* brand. She was asked in 1894 to transform a serial biography of Napoleon—originally begun by British writer Robert Sherard—from, in the words of historian Harold Wilson, a "rather negative,

jingoist anti-Napoleon piece of writing" into something more balanced.[95] In 1895, she began work on the Lincoln biography that would double the magazine's circulation and make her reputation in the field of journalism and historical writing. In the wake of this triumph, the magazine began to expand and evolve, taking on "the aspect which became so familiar during the muckraking movement" (71). Combining a refined literary sensibility with original reporting, "These men [and a few women] were to exploit the magazine's principal advantage over the daily newspaper: the ability to analyze events and reconstruct them in perspective" (81). During the Spanish-American War, the once ideologically uncommitted magazine began to champion social, political, and economic reform.

The ethos and mission of *McClure's* during the first decade years of the 20th century are epitomized by Tarbell's famous 1904 series *The History of the Standard Oil Company*, which, like Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, transformed public opinion, shaped policy, and became a seminal text in the history of investigative journalism. The magazine's editorial staff had long been interested in trusts and in the exploitation of natural resources. According to Wilson, the idea of writing about these concerns by way of a narrative history of the largest trust of them all, "its small beginnings and growth, its forced alliances to get transportation, its combinations," was suggested by Maurice Low, who wanted to give the story, "an individuality, a human quality" (134). Tarbell's stewardship of the project was influenced not only by her considerable credentials, but by her "victim's knowledge of that trust," her family having been bankrupted by Standard Oil during her youth (138). The project, therefore, was always negotiating a balance between factual reporting and polemic. Early on, the entire editorial staff (Tarbell

---

[95] To prevent confusion, I should note that in this chapter, I refer to two completely unrelated Harold Wilsons, one a member of the Eddy household and the other a late twentieth-century historian and author of the definitive history of *McClure's*.

included) attempted to balance their critical reporting on trusts with supportive portrayals. Wilson claims that,

> It was mainly the accumulation of facts that transformed the attitude of McClure, Phillips, Baker, and Steffins to one of hostility towards industrial combinations. Miss Tarbell was the vengeful collector of these facts. ... Although Miss Tarbell felt committed to write an objective history of Standard Oil when she commenced her work in September, 1901, she was quite conscious that her endeavors were modeled after "Josiah Flynt's investigations" and the Wall Street stories of Lefevre which attacked the "evils of stock broking in an excellent form." She noted in retrospect, "we were neither apologists nor critics, only journalists intent on discovering what had gone into the making of this most perfect of all monopolies." (139-40)

This model, which combined dispassionate reportage, compelling historical narrative, and reform-mindedness was probably very much what Georgine Milmine had in mind when she undertook her own research on Mary Baker Eddy and Christian Science. Like that of Rockefeller, Eddy's life story had a singular "American-ness" to it. She had come from humble beginnings and gone on to establish an organization with international reach, attaining considerable wealth (though nothing even approaching that of the oil magnate) in the process. And as I have already shown, though the First Church of Christ, Scientist was not a trust, its vast resources—based on sales of Mrs. Eddy's writings, three periodicals, private donations, and fees collected from students of Eddy's mental healing methods—attracted suspicion, particularly for those who felt it was unseemly for a religious organization to amass this kind of wealth. Unfavorable comparisons to the Catholic Church were frequently invoked. Furthermore, like Standard Oil, the First Church of Christ, Scientist was at the center of national debates being played out in newspapers, courts, and legislatures.

Comparisons to Rockefeller (and the Pope) stemmed from the widespread public perception that Eddy exercised a domineering, tyrannical influence over her followers.

Following the standard set by Twain and by Tarbell's previous work for *McClure's*, Milmine and the other collaborators on the Eddy project would also attempt to use detailed documentary evidence and interviews with people in the know to further advance this argument that Eddy was the despot of her own small kingdom. Tellingly, they tended to focus on her tyrranical and unwomanly nature rather than attack the system of beliefs she advanced. Indeed, the concluding installment of *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy* would suggest that while there was much to be gained from psychotherapeutics, it ought only to be practiced by trained orthodox physicians.

Tarbell clearly influenced Milmine and later collaborators in one other important way: through her skill at crafting psychologically complex, morally nuanced portrayals of the historical figures at the center of the projects she helmed. Cather scholars who study this text tend to focus on it as evidence of Cather's developing voice as an author. Stouck declares the biography's factually problematic but dramatically compelling accounts of Eddy's childhood and early adult life as "some of the finest portrait sketches and reflections on human nature that Willa Cather would ever write" (xviii). But whoever wrote these sections of the text was clearly indebted to Tarbell for the way they combine reporting, psychoanalysis, and nuanced ethical judgment. Though *McClure's* was always straddling the line between polemic and reportage in its public interest stories, as Steve Weinburg notes,

> Tarbell's research into the life of John D. Rockefeller convinced her that good and evil could be embodied simultaneously in one individual. Reducing Rockefeller to a symbol of good or evil would be a biographical sin in itself. Although Tarbell was at times ruthless when chronicling Rockefeller's life, she did not make that mistake; she did not distort his accomplishments into a sensationalistic paradigm of good or evil. In fact, she titled the final chapter of her exposé "The Legitimate Greatness of the Standard Oil Company." (xiv)

The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy strives for similar balance, though, as we shall see, it does not always succeed.

Georgine Milmine

Those making grandiose claims for Cather's authorship tend to radically underestimate Georgine Milmine's journalistic credentials. Though arguably not as skilled as her muse, Milmine deserves her due. Bohlke rather patronizingly (and mistakenly) attributes Milmine's journalistic credibility to the husband she married after the project had begun. Stouck at least correctly identifies Milmine as a newspaperwoman but intimates—as most scholars studying this problem do—that the materials for the biography "had to be verified and rewritten" as if this represented a serious lack of skill on Milmine's part rather than part of standard editorial practice (xv). In her book on Cather's years as a journalist, Catherine M. Downs gives Milmine even less credit, stating that she came to the magazine with merely "a pile of facts" that Burton Hendrick had to be hired to turn into "a readable biography" (116).[96] Indeed, based on the accounts of current critics, I was fully prepared to find in Milmine's manuscripts evidence of functional illiteracy. But all of the extant drafts and handwritten notes contain perfectly lucid, grammatical prose. The worst thing that can be said about her writing is that it is ordinary, even pedestrian. These drafts certainly lack the verve and stylistic flair of the

[96] A five-page typewritten biographical sketch on Georgine Milmine appears in the *McClure's* subject file at the library, but it is problematic in the same ways that the *McClure's* articles themselves are problematic. Based primarily on the testimony of the woman who was offered Milmine's former job at the *Syracuse Herald*, a woman who later became a Christian Science, this brief account is extremely gossipy, citing a rumor that Milmine and Wells were dismissed from the *Herald* because of their romantic relationship. Wells was, at the time, married to a mentally ill woman who was in an asylum, though there appears to be some confusion as to whether the incarcerated woman was Wells's wife or sister.

published versions but read like straightforward reportage, very much, in fact, like what a newspaper reporter might write.[97]

Cather scholars frequently cite the rigorous documentation as one of the real strengths as a biography, pointing to the year and a half that she spent fact-checking Milmine's research even as installments were going to press. Though various independent reports in the Milmine file attest to the fact that Cather played a big role in bringing the research up to date, a great deal of the documentation most celebrated in the final version is present in this draft. In fact, the section of the biography that compares bits of *Science and Health* to the writings attributed to P.P. Quimby—also usually cited as one of the text's most laudable aspects—is more or less intact. Indeed, the greatest flaw in the reading experience is the long passages of unbroken quotation, unmediated by much of the explanation or authorial interpretation that appears in the published versions. Milmine clearly required an editor, in other words, not because her prose reflected incompetence but because it was rather boring and wordy. Take, for example, this paragraph from the first installment in the *McClure's* series, published in December of 1906 under the editorship of Burton Hendrick:

> The public began to hear of this new movement out of Boston about twenty years ago. The serious-minded, the orthodox, reading in the newspapers how this invalid or that child-bearing woman had died under Christian Science treatment, regarded it as a menace. The frivolous, hearing how its healers professed to treat present bodies with absent minds, snatched at the phrase 'absent treatment,' and took it as a joke. (211)

And consider it alongside the paragraphs from the 1905 draft upon which it seems to be based:

---

[97] The contrast in styles between the drafts and published versions is interesting to note in light of Ahearn's claim that McClure "demanded a clean, straightforward prose style, a style that allowed the facts to speak for themselves," since one of the big contributions of the editors appears to be *embellishing* Milmine's prose and interpreting her evidence for the reader (20-1).

> By others, Christian Science as a scheme of life is condemned. Its doctrines are declared to be dangerous and, in both theory and practice, opposed to the best interests of society. Mrs. Eddy's claim to the discovery of the theory underlying Christian Science is contested, and her assumption of divine inspiration is held to be blasphemous. As an individual she is regarded, by these, as the essence of falsity, and her teachings as no better than a revival of witchcraft and a menace to the public welfare.
>
> By a third or neutral class, the whole matter is taken less seriously. They are neither for nor against Christian Science, but they find humor in its claims and practices. It may not be too much to say that this view, is, on the whole, the prevailing one, and that in most communities the popular feeling in regard to Christian Science is one of ~~interested~~ skepticism which frequently relaxes into levity. (1-2)

While the latter sample is perfectly readable, the published version preserves the original thought in condensed form and ratchets up the level of drama by including the case of the young woman dying in childbirth. The diction—"frivolous" and "serious-minded," for example—makes it clearer how the author judges these points of view.

The draft, like the series itself, stakes out clear positions on several major controversies surrounding the movement, including the degree to which Eddy herself could claim "authorship" of her religio-medical philosophy.[98] The biography's central concern (in all forms from draft to book) is proving through testimony and documentary evidence that Mary Baker Eddy had—if not explicitly stolen—at least appropriated the

[98] I've chosen the Quimby issue only because it is so prominent, but the biography does, in fact, intervene in the controversial questions of whether or not Eddy was a terrible student as a young woman, whether she terrorized her family as a child with hysterical fits, how she came to give up her own son for adoption following the death of her husband, her relationship to various disaffected church members, her physical abuse of certain male acolytes, the quality of her governance of the Mother Church and the Christian Science organization as a whole, whether or not her husband and lawyer conspired to murder her former publisher, and whether or not she was, in fact, out of her mind. These were all openly debated questions at the time, matters that scholars who study the movement—both in and outside of the community of faith—have been trying to clarify for over a century. One central flaw of much of the analysis of this biography by is the tendency to treat its pronouncements on such matters as entirely uncontroversial or as the last word on the subject.

original ideas of Phineas Parkhurst Quimby and recalcitrantly refused to show her indebtedness to him.[99] Because this controversy, which had been raging for twenty years before Milmine ever took it upon herself to conduct research on Mrs. Eddy, is a complex one, a brief overview of the essentials seems warranted. In this, I am relying heavily on Gillian Gill's 1998 biography of Mary Baker Eddy, the most thorough forensic analysis of the documentary evidence to date, which I have been able to corroborate in a couple of essential places with my own observations from the materials in the Milmine file.

The basic facts are these: in 1883, Mrs. Eddy sued one Edward J. Arens for plagiarizing several pamphlets on mental healing from her own writings. Finding an unlikely ally in another former patient and student of P.P. Quimby, Julius Dresser, Arens based his defense on the claim that Eddy had been teaching from Quimby's own manuscripts for years, that she had later incorporated those manuscripts into her own work and that they served the basis for the first edition of *Science and Health.* However, because Arens was unable to produce those manuscripts in Quimby's own hand, the court found in favor of Mrs. Eddy and ordered Arens to pay court costs and destroy the offending pamphlets. At that point, Julius Dresser, who had shown no interest in preserving Quimby's legacy in the nearly two decades between the late healer's death and when Mrs. Eddy started garnering a public reputation, began making escalating claims about the degree of Eddy's indebtedness to Quimby, beginning with a pseudonymous letter to the Boston *Post*. Joining with him were his wife Annetta, his son Horatio, Phineas Quimby's son George, and various disaffected former students of Mary

[99] The Milmine file also contains an extensive set of handwritten notes linking Christian Science to Shakerism, a nineteenth century religious sect with a woman, Ann Lee, at its center. In one section, Milmine ponders whether or not Mrs. Eddy appropriated certain aspects of Shakerism: "It is a question whether Mrs. Eddy deliberately borrowed Ann's notions, seeing that they had worked so well, or whether she naturally follows the same course. There is no doubt that they belonged to the same general type" (14). She also took notes on the probability that Eddy would have exposed to Shakerism in her youth. Since none of this material appears in *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy*, it would seem that this line of inquiry hit a dead end.

Baker Eddy. The Quimby Manuscripts, however, would always exist more as myth than as fact. George Quimby, who had taken on the role of guardian of his father's legacy, refused to release the manuscripts to the public, though the Dressers leaked fragments of whatever they happened to own. As Gill reports, "only in 1921 was Horatio Dresser permitted to edit and publish what he polemically called *The Quimby Manuscripts: Showing the Discovery of Spiritual Healing and the Origin of Christian Science*" (141). Thanks to the 1988 publication of *The Complete Writings* of P.P. Quimby, edited by Ervin Seale, "it is now possible to see how prejudiced and polemical Horatio's editorial labors were" (141). Indeed, Seale makes it clear that the documents on which the collection is based are not "manuscripts," per se, but merely writings *attributed* to P.P. Quimby.

Numerous independent reports on Quimby indicate that he wrote little of his theories down himself. Indeed, as Gill states, handwritten notes on file at the Mugar Memorial Library in Boston suggest that he was not materially capable of doing so. Instead, he relied on various amanuenses, including his son George, Julius Dresser, Emma and Sarah Ware and, at one point, Mary Patterson, the future Mrs. Eddy, to take down his thoughts for him:

> Thus there is no documentary proof that Quimby ever committed to paper the vast majority of the texts ascribed to him, no proof that he produced any text that someone else could, even in the loosest sense, "copy." What Quimby's family and friends did was transcribe what Quimby dictated, or, more mundanely, take down what Quimby said. By their own testimony the so-called copyists functioned at the very least as stenographers, copy editors, ghost writers, and think-tank participants. These were no doubt disinterested and even noble services, given freely to assist a man all loved and admired and who was clearly incapable of writing for himself. But the claim that this activity was copying is very odd indeed, and, in my view, the claim is defined less by truth than by polemic. (144)

Milmine claims at various points in her draft (claims that make it into the final version) to have examined the "Quimby manuscripts" at the home of his son in Portland, Maine. However, given the history of these writings, it is clear that she was relying on the heavily edited volumes compiled by the Dressers and George Quimby.

The only document that was ever offered to the public as "proof positive" that Mrs. Eddy had plagiarized from Quimby's writings was a small pamphlet called "Questions and Answers," a portion of which was printed alongside an early piece of writing by Mrs. Eddy called "Science of Man" in both the *McClure's* articles (space for which is clearly marked out in every draft in the Milmine file, showing that it was part of her scheme for the articles from the very beginning) and in an anonymous 1904 *New York Times* article. "Questions and Answers" was among the early teaching materials used by the future Mrs. Eddy—then Mrs. Glover, following the desertion of her husband Daniel Patterson. And her students faithfully reported that she consistently attributed "Questions and Answers" to her late mentor. She would later have this text copied by students with an appended preface written by herself. In later versions, that preface was integrated into the text itself. Based on this testimony, Milmine—who corresponded with Dresser—makes the claim that over the course of years, Mrs. Eddy had gradually made minor alterations to "Questions and Answers" until she finally gave it the title "Science of Man" or "Science of Soul," "used it as the essential basis of her book *Science and Health*, and, finally, incorporated it under the name 'Recapitulation' in the third and all subsequent editions" (Gill 231). The problem, as Gill argues, is that "Questions and Answers" and *the published version* of "Science of Man" (the basis for "Recapitulation") are substantially different documents, and there are no extant intermediate drafts that suggest that over time Quimby's manuscript was altered by Mrs. Eddy into the form that

was published. Both are preserved in the Milmine file, so this was easy to verify.[100] The side-by-side comparison in both the *New York Times* and *McClure's* of the two is, rather, the product of a misleading bit of sampling:

> [O]ut of either bad faith or bad scholarship, they added on to the end of what they labeled the original Quimby text a paragraph from the preface which Mrs. Eddy had written to her copy of Quimby's manuscript. She herself incorporated this passage into her teaching manuscript, most notably in the copy she gave to Addie Spofford, which passed to her husband Daniel, and at last to Georgine Milmine. Thus Mrs. Eddy's own words were integrated into the Quimby text, compared against her own manuscript, found, not surprisingly, identical, and cited as a flagrant example of plagiarism. (Gill 232)

It is apparent from her notes and drafts that Milmine was quite early on persuaded by the Dressers' case against Mrs. Eddy and was attempting through her research to find further confirmation of and an explanation for Eddy's duplicity. The result is the wonderfully nuanced—though flawed—psychological portrait that so many have attributed to Willa Cather. Stouck, for example, argues that "As the strange drama of Mrs. Eddy's life unfolds in the narrative, we become aware of Willa Cather, the

---

[100] There is a typescript among Milmine's research materials of a document that purports to be "Science of Man." It bears a title page dated 1876 inscribed "The Science of Man, By which the sick are healed. Embracing Questions & Answers in Moral Science. Arranged for the learner by Mrs. Mary Baker Glover." What it contains, however, is a typescript of "Questions and Answers" with Mrs. Glover's preface. "Science of Man" as it *actually* appeared in published form in 1876 is a very different document indeed. It is constructed in question and answer format, but the twenty-four questions in it are *entirely* different from the fourteen questions in Quimby's text. Either Milmine or whomever sent this typescript to her appended the following note:

> This pamphlet, "Science of Man," etc., is a statement of what is contained in the three manuscripts. The only new idea expressed is that manipulation does harm. There are also references to her discovery of the truth, although these are not very strong nor positive and no date of the discovery is given. Nothing is said of Dr. Quimby. The Q's and A's bring out the same thoughts, expressed in similar and often the identical language of the manuscripts. It covers 24 pages, printed in small pica or type or about that size.

This is very odd indeed. While it is possible that Mrs. Eddy took to calling Quimby's "Questions and Answers" "Science of Man," the title page positions her as the "arranger" rather than "author." However, given that this is not the "Science of Man" that appeared in print in 1876, I would say that one of Milmine's informants was either dishonest or badly mistaken.

burgeoning novelist with a powerful and sympathetic interest in human psychology" (xviii). David Porter's book chapters on the biography similarly note the origins of Cather's finely drawn, complex heroines, in her psychological study of Mary Baker Eddy. The introduction of the long draft, however, announces from the outset that Milmine was concerned with Eddy's psychology, with "that strength which often goes hand in hand with weakness, which makes no account of means if the desire is obtained" (4). Indeed, Milmine was taking a different approach from critics of Christian Science like Frederick Peabody, who simply wrote Eddy off as a knowing charlatan, whose controlling, megalomaniacal tendencies had been evidence from her early childhood, when she was prone to bouts of hysteria that required the members of her family to walk on eggshells. Of her troubled past as a sick young woman, Milmine says in the long draft:

> With the passage of years these attacks grew to be an old story and drew from her family <and friends> less sympathy. Some of them have not hesitated to say that her hysteria was brought on and dismissed at will and <that it> was employed mainly for the purpose of gaining her own way when she was opposed. This is not an uncommon accusation made against hysterical subjects, but hysteria is a vague disease and its causes and influences are too remote and too varying to say with any degree of certainty just how far <in Mary Baker's case> these ~~seizures of Mary Baker's~~ <demonstrations> were preventable, nor how much her nervous constitution had to do with her daily behavior. (15)[101]

In this draft, Milmine advances the argument that this nervous temperament, flair for drama, and exceptional sensitivity were part of her psychological makeup as a religious "genius." At certain points, she even considers credible the notion that Mary Baker Eddy may have been, from a very early age, psychic. In her autobiography, Eddy herself

[101] In quotations from the drafts, I have attempted to reflect the handwritten notations, showing what was crossed out and what was added, as the deletions and insertions are sometimes quite interesting.

reported receiving a spiritual calling as a very young girl similar to the calling that the Old Testament prophet Samuel received as a boy. Milmine allows room for the possibility that the story was genuine, or at least that Eddy was sincere when she wrote of it:

> This incident may indicate that the child, Mary Baker, thus early received her first ~~summons~~ <spiritual communication> from heaven, or it may be considered as evidence that she possessed a "psychic" temperament, which in her later life was developed and made account of, as will be seen in later chapters. In either case its significance is almost nullified by the fact that the voice was heard by the cousin, Mehitable Huntoon, as well as by Mary, <unless Mehitable was "psychic" too.>. (10)

Eddy would also later report that she "took on" the sufferings of the individuals she healed and was sensitive to the thoughts of others, which she believed had the power to harm or even kill her if directed at her with malicious intent.[102] Milmine also takes these claims seriously, suggesting that "in this peculiar 'sixth sense' may lie the physiological reason for her outbreaks of passion as a child, for her over-fine nerves, and for all or many of the traits which rendered her a peculiar child, a disagreeable girl and a difficult woman" (69). She goes on to express sympathy for the emotional burden such a sensitivity must have presented, which "suggests that Mary Morse Baker may never have been understood by her family, her neighbors, or associates, or even by herself, but may have been in a large measure at the mercy of ~~her~~ <a> peculiar, complex organism" (69).

Milmine's research notes show that she was consulting external sources on the subject of psychology and religion and that she favored the explanations of thinkers from the school of Pragmatism.[103] She transcribed sections from William James's chapter on

---

[102] This would become a fully realized theory, known as "Malicious Animal Magnetism" or M.A.M, which first appears in the second edition to *Science and Health.* An excellent analysis of this theory as it relates to Mark Twain's own speculations about the possibility of telepathy appears in Schrager.

[103] An expert, French doctor Pierre Janet, did, in fact, attempt to diagnose the octogenarian Mary Baker Eddy's childhood ailments through the account in the *McClure's* biography, the details of which were

"Religion and Neurology" from *Varieties of Religious Experience*, including the following:

> Like many other geniuses who have brought forth fruits effective enough for commemoration in the pages of biography, religious geniuses have often shown symptoms of nervous instability. Even more perhaps than other kinds of genius, religious leaders have been subject to abnormal psychical visitations. Invariably they have been creations of exalted emotional sensibility. Often they have led a discordant inner life, and had melancholy during a part of their career. They have known no measure, been liable to obsessions, and fixed ideas; and frequently they have fallen into trances, heard voices, seen visions, and presented all sorts of peculiarities which are ordinarily classes as pathological. Often, moreover, these pathological features in their career have helped to give them their religious authority and influence. (Qtd. In "Author's Notes")

It is through this lens that Milmine views Eddy's alleged appropriation, even theft, of P.P. Quimby's theories, not as a calculated act of deception but as the product of self-deception on the part of a complex, sensitive mind. The crossed-out portion of the following paragraph is telling, showing that Milmine was in the process of reconfiguring her initial—often more negative—interpretations (or, perhaps, censoring them to assuage the concerns of Baker and Phillips):

> From this time on, Mrs. Glover gradually ~~and perhaps naturally, to a woman with her pronounced desire to dominate and control,~~ ceased to proclaim Dr. Quimby as her physician and teacher, or as the discoverer of mental cure. She talked less and less of him and finally even said to one of her students that Dr. Quimby had been a hindrance to her instead of a help. This, it may be supposed, was in reference to Dr. Quimby's practice of occasionally rubbing the head of a patient, which Mrs. Glover now held to be an obstacle in the path of true mental science. This doing away with head rubbing was the first deviation she had made from the letter of the Quimby instructions. It, no doubt, profoundly impressed Mrs. Glover and gave her a strong feeling of proprietorship in the system, since she must have felt that it was an improvement over the Quimby method, and a step

---

based on the testimonies of people who claimed to know or to know people who knew the Baker family. According to Gill, Janet pronounced Eddy a "classic hysteric," and his book on the subject "has been cited as medical evidence, as if Janet had ever seen or treated Mrs. Eddy" (39-40).

> in advance. She was looked up to, also, by her students, as the only interpreter and expounder of the new idea <"science">. This attitude of her pupils, all of whom were much younger than Mrs. Glover, very likely helped to hasten to a conclusion the idea, slowly forming in her own mind, that she herself was more responsible for Dr. Quimby's "science" than Dr. Quimby himself. The questions and discussions in class necessarily brought out many sides of the subject, and in the effort which Mrs. Glover would naturally make to penetrate this philosophy in order to meet the inquiries of her students, and of those who came to investigate, she became ~~herself~~ <more and> more fully grounded in ~~the principle~~ <her sense of possession>.[104] (105)

This interpretation features prominently in the articles and the book. One paragraph from the latter echoes the logic and diction of the preceding:

> Surrounded as she was by these admiring students, who hung upon her words and looked to her for the ultimate wisdom, Mrs. Glover gradually became less acutely conscious of Quimby's relation to the healing system she taught. She herself was being magnified and exalted daily by her loyal disciples in whose extravagant devotion she saw repeated the attitude of many of Quimby's patients—herself among them—to their healer. Instead of pointing always backward and reiterating, "I *learned* this from Dr. *Quimby*," etc., she began to acquiesce in the belief of her students, who regarded her as the source of what she taught. Her infatuated students, indeed, desired to see no further than their teacher, and doubtless would not have looked beyond her had she pointed. Consequently she said less and less about Quimby as time went on, and by 1875, when her first book, *Science and Health*, was issued, she had crowded him altogether out of his 'science.' (161-2)

In the draft, Milmine negotiates her way through the moral complexities of the problem, indicating that it is not her intention

> [T]o excuse Mrs. Glover's weakness in appropriating Dr. Quimby's ideas, but merely to point out that this false step, which has been unreservedly condemned by all who know the facts, may have been only the yielding <surrender> to a natural temptation to take advantage of a situation which seemed to suggest <to her> at every point that she had reason to be

[104] An early version of this theory appears in Milmine's handwritten notes on an interview with Richard Kennedy, Mrs. Eddy's first student who later broke with her. It appears, in fact, that Kennedy may be the original source for this argument.

> recognized as the "founder" of Christian Science, and to that extend it was probably not a deliberate, premeditated, steal <appropriation of Dr. Quimby's ideas> as has been charged. (118-119)

She does, however, indict Eddy for shoddy attempts to cover her tracks once the appearance of dishonestly was uncovered[105]:

> The part of the transaction on Mrs. Eddy's side for which no good word can be said is her subsequent attitude. Failing ~~of~~ the strength of character to acknowledge her human weakness in substituting herself for Dr. Quimby as the originator of ~~the application of~~ the <mental system of> healing ~~principle~~<,> Mrs. Glover, when the word was finally spoken proclaiming herself to be the author and discoverer of Christian Science, and finding that this aroused the resentment of Dr. Quimby's friends and patients, <to a degree which she could not have foreseen>, felt herself obliged to defend her position, and <she> has kept at it constantly since, ~~at the expense of truth~~ <in the face of> all the ~~easily obtained~~ evidence of her own making which shows her to have been an ardent disciple of Dr. Quimby and to have ~~acknowledged~~ <proclaimed> him as the <apostle> of ~~the~~ <a> new truth which <she thought> was to revolutionize the world. (118-19)

This assessment is clearly the basis for the following paragraph from the final book version:

> If she has been a loser through this controversy, it is not because of what she borrowed from Quimby, but because of her later unwillingness to admit her obligation to him. Had she observed the etiquette of the regular sciences, where personal ambition is subsidiary to a desire for truth, and where discoverers and investigators are scrupulous to acknowledge the sources from which they have obtained help, it would have strengthened rather than weakened her position. (104)

The foregoing is only a brief sample reflecting the fact that the foundational research, organizing principles, and many of most compelling ideas in the biography

---

[105] It is worth pointing out that Mrs. Eddy did, in fact, acknowledge Quimby in her teachings and writings throughout the early part of her career, and these statements are used as evidence *against* her in the *McClure's* biography. Gill suggests that by 1883, when accusations began emerging "Mrs. Eddy's attitude toward Quimby had changed. She was now an acknowledged leader. Aware of how far she had travelled intellectually and spiritually from the Quimby period, Mary Baker Eddy was no longer willing to play the part of disciple or acolyte. Still recovering from her husband's death, buried in work, and besieged by problems of different kinds, she seems to have been taken off her guard by the Dresser accusations and lashed out against her attackers" (313).

originated with Milmine's early attempts to translate her notes into narrative. But since this biography is so often cited as a credible source on Eddy's life, the problems with that foundational research should be briefly acknowledged. Future scholarly biographers like Gill have thoroughly explicated the problems with Milmine's sources and conclusions, and many of those problems are evident in Milmine's research materials themselves. On the Quimby matter, she relied extensively on evidence presented by people with a considerable personal and financial stake in taking Mrs. Eddy down—not only the Dressers, who were practicing and writing about mental healing as leaders in the New Thought movement, and Quimby's son—but Frederick Peabody, who—as I have shown—had in 1899 lost an important case against Mrs. Eddy and who had spent the intervening years giving lectures and writing pamphlets on Christian Science. As Gill has pointed out, in every case of disputed fact, sources against Mrs. Eddy are generally treated as credible whereas Mrs. Eddy's own statements and the statements of her followers are viewed with extreme suspicion.

Sources for information on Mrs. Eddy's early life and career are even more problematic. As Powell states in his letter, Milmine relied primarily on testimony that she obtained by living among the people who might know something, gradually persuading them to open up to her, and turning their testimony into signed affidavits. Powell makes it clear in his letter that a resident of Tilton confirmed "this affidavit story, and told me in some detail how, as Notary Public, he went around with Georgine Milmine, and took the affidavits of many people in his part of the country, though his estimate of their value—knowing many of the people—was not as high as Georgine Milmine's" (Powell, 13 January 1933). Cather herself critiques the use of such sources in the chapters edited by Burton Hendrick in her letter to Anderson. Finding credible sources on the early life of an octogenarian from a family with no special distinction in a small New England town must

have been extremely difficult. The Milmine file indicates that the sources of some of the juiciest tidbits were small children when the purported incidents occurred or were merely reporting things they had heard second hand long after Mary Baker Eddy had achieved notoriety. Hannah Sanborn Philbrook, who had attended the same school as Mary Baker but self-admittedly did not know her very well, was one of Milmine's most prolific correspondents on the subject of Eddy's past. The same problems of memory and bias plague the chapters on Eddy's life during the 1870's and 80's. Frank Sprague was not merely being paranoid when he wrote feverishly to Alfred Farlow that "Various opponents of Mrs. Eddy have used the opportunity to give her such statistics and information as would aid in making an effective presentation; and she has had ample opportunity to collect whatever material could be gathered from all hostile sources" (Sprague, 15 July 1905). Indeed, Milmine's research notes reveal that many of the affidavits on Mrs. Eddy's life during this period were provided by none other than Frederick Peabody himself. [106]

Burton Hendrick

The far more experienced journalists who produced the final version of the series and book continued to draw conclusions based on the same problematic sources. This is particularly true of the two installments revised by Burton J. Hendrick, who, as Cather reports, was taken off the project because of their inflammatory nature. The fact that *McClure's* was already facing an expensive libel suit because of articles Hendrick had written was most likely a key motivating factor in replacing Hendrick with Cather as

[106] Gill and the finding aid for the Milmine file suggest that certain documents, including interview notes, are in Peabody's hand, and a handwritten note by Milmine indicates that Peabody supplied the affidavits from Horace T. Wentworth, Mrs. Catherine Isabel Clapp, Mrs. Lucy Holmes, and Charles Wentworth, all critical informants for the section on Eddy's early years as a teacher of Christian Science.

head of the project. The differences between the draft section on which these two installments were based and the final version in both *McClure's* and the book are striking. Milmine's circumspect reporting and nuanced portrayal of Mrs. Eddy is replaced with hyper-charged invective. Though Milmine's sources were hardly unbiased accounts of immutable facts, she at least indicates in her draft where reports of specific incidents came from and often weighs those reports against Mrs. Eddy's own words in a way that leaves room for a reader's discretion. The published versions tend to pronounce upon these disputed issues as if they were established facts and remove lexical signals that the writer is exercising a researcher's judgment on a controversial matter.

Consider, for example, the portrayal of Eddy's father, Mark Baker. Outlines of this early section (of unknown date and authorship) suggest that the characterization of the Baker patriarch was designed to suggest hereditary origins for Eddy's famously mercurial temper. Milmine describes him in the long draft as "intensely 'set' on having his own way" with a temper "beyond all ordinary limits," but she qualifies these characteristics as "accompaniments of qualities that make for progress and achievement" however "trying" they might be to "family and community (4). She goes on to suggest that, "Had it not been for the positiveness of the Mark Baker disposition, it is interesting to surmise that there might have been no Christian Science movement of present day proportions, and the public of Albert Baker's period would not have mourned his death as an untimely interruption of a great career" (4).[107] The revision directed by Hendrick and appearing in the final book version, however, contains a far less supportive reading of the Baker patriarch:

[107] Albert Baker was a famous and beloved New Hampshire politician and friend of a young Franklin Pierce. He was nominated for his district's congressional seat but died quite suddenly before the election on October 21, 1841.

> These incidents show the caliber of the man who was Mrs. Eddy's father. There is no doubt that he possessed qualities out of the ordinary. With his natural force and strong convictions, and with his rectitude of character, he might have been more than a local figure, but for the insurmountable obstacles of a childishly passionate temper and a deep perversity of mind. He was without imagination and without sympathy. From fighting for a principle he invariably passed to fighting for his own way, and he was unable to see that the one cause was not as righteous as the other. His portrait—a daguerreotype—shows hardness and endurance and immovability. There is no humility in the heavy lip and square mouth, no aspiration in the shrewd eyes; the high forehead is merely forbidding. (9-10)

Milmine's treatment of the Eddy's hysterical "fits" as a child is also far more sympathetic than what appears in the article and book versions. She depicts the young Mary's outbursts of temper and frequent bouts of illness as the rebellion of a dynamic, energetic personality against an oppressive family environment. The revisions characterize them as evidence that the future founder of Christian Science ruled tyrannically over her own family through irrational and inexcusable behavior even as a very small child.

Both versions use the fact that Mary's outbursts tended to be worst on Sundays to support these wildly divergent interpretations of her behavior. The draft describes the situation thus:

> An incident showing her excessive sensibility is related by a member of the Baker family. On Sundays, Mark Baker was strict as to the proper observance of the day in his own house. There was the usual church going, and after that, silence and decorum at home. It was on these blue-law Sundays that Mary's nerves received their severest tests. The youngest of the large household, it was hard for her to sit in enforced quite all day, and remain<ing> indoors from morning until night, with the small rooms over-crowded with five other children, all <active, but> obliged to keep equally silent.
>
> Sundays thus became the regular day for Mary's attacks of hysteria, and after these she would lie <as> rigid as a corpse while a doctor was sent for, and hastened to rescue her from the cataleptic state. When at last she had two of these attacks on one Sunday, the older children took up the subject with the head of the house and pleaded for more liberty on the

> seventh day. After he had granted this and they could run about the farm on Sunday, Mary's hysteria grew less violent. (6-7)

This version suggests that the Baker children all chafed under their father's Puritanical regime, that Mary's fits provided a pretext for quite reasonable requests on the part of the entire family for more freedom. The book version, however, depicts the youngest child's behavior as entirely unsympathetic, a source of alienation between herself and other family members:

> The family rules were relaxed where she was concerned, and the chief problem in the Baker house was how to pacify Mary and avoid her nervous "fits." Even Mark Baker, heretofore invincible, was obliged to give way before the dominance of his infant daughter. His time-honoured observance of the Sabbath, which was a fixed institution at the Baker farm, was abandoned because Mary could not, after a long morning in church, sit still all day in the house with folded hands, listening to the reading of the Bible. Sundays became a day of torture not only to the hysterical child, but to all the family, for she invariably had one of her bad attacks, and the day ended in excitement and anxiety. These evidences of an abnormal condition of the nerves are important to any study of Mrs. Eddy and her career. (12-13)

To make matters worse, Hendrick's introductory installment was published along with a photograph that was purported to be of Mrs. Eddy but was in fact a photo of a woman who had died in California two years prior. This mistake was immediately detected, reported by rival magazines and newspapers, and significantly undermined the credibility of the series before it had even gotten out of the gate. The *New Hampshre Patriot* mused:

> Three years to secure material facts and then to print the picture of a woman who died two years ago in California, and to represent to an intelligent clientele that that picture is a photograph of the central figure in the wonderful literary production, is a surprising achievement in reliability and accuracy.

> "False in one thing, false in all," is a legal maxim, and if this guide to the value of evidence be applied to McClure's, then the whole story is discredited in advance. ("Additional Canards")[108]

Even supportive readers expressed concern that inaccuracies would cast doubt on the entire project. As a reader named Louis Block wrote to the editors in February 1907, "I can not help but feel that your magazine is engaged in a very valuable piece of work in publishing these articles, but at the same time their worth and value will be greatly diminished if they are subjected to the suspicion of not being founded on fact" (Block, 11 February 1907).

Willa Cather

Cather herself expressed disdain for the Hendrick installments, indicating that they relied on rumors rather than hard evidence or credible testimony. McClure, she says, selected her for the project because she had no particular axe to grind on this subject. Therefore, what is notable about the huge section that Cather edited is the lack of these dramatic interventions into Milmine's initial assessments. Cather's presence, one might say, is distinguished through her absence, by the tendency *not* to deviate too much from Milmine's relatively—considering the vitriolic nature of the public debate about Mrs. Eddy—even-handed assessments. This is not to say, however, that the installments that Cather shepherded to print are unbiased. The *ad feminam* attacks are noticeably toned down compared to Hendrick's installments, though the document still indicts her for a

[108] This article also calls into question the methods by which *McClure's* got its information, reporting that, "The men who came to Concord did not have for their purpose the ascertainment of facts; they did not want the truth as known to Concord people, but ardently desired to have preconceived notions affirmed and slanderous insinuations and statements endorsed" ("Additional Canards"). One Concord local who was interviewed by representatives of the magazine reportedly told them, "There is little to gain by continuing this conversation; you are not after what I know; you desire that I should approve your guesses. It is clear to me that your purpose is to write Mrs. Eddy down regardless of what her neighbors and those who know her best may say" ("Additional Canards").

lack of gratitude, subservience, and womanly virtue. John Dittemore, who met with the young author-editor for over an hour in 1908, described Cather as "a very pleasant woman, who, I believe, intends to do the right thing, but her associations with the enemies of Christian Science … have created a very violent prejudice against Mrs. Eddy, evidence of which cropped up every few minutes" (Dittemore, 31 October 1908). Though it is impossible to really pinpoint which exact words for which Cather was responsible, words which may have had their origin in some intermediate draft produced by Milmine or some other editor, I can indicate some noteworthy differences between the drafts and research materials and the finished product that may suggest some distinct departure between the voices of each writer.

One such departure is the greatly enhanced analysis of *Science and Health*. Though Milmine transcribed long sections of Eddy's writing into her notes, the drafts still read precisely like transcriptions with page after page of unmediated direct quotation. A more thorough review was published in the final installment of the series, June 1908, but it was transplanted to the middle of Chapter XI in the book version.[109] In that concluding article, the writer lays out a thorough exegesis of Mrs. Eddy's theory on the nature of mind and matter, on Scripture, on marriage, poverty, and healing. Her assessment of Eddy's writings is, in the main, negative, but one cannot deny that it represents a fairly intimate acquaintance with the writings in question, and her assessment, which, after all, was written for the mass market, is highly readable and even compelling. The wittiness of the piece recalls the glib style of Twain's essays for *North American Review*. To quote from the article, "Having thus disposed of matter, Mrs. Eddy seems to think that her definition has actually changed the case, and that though we live in houses, eat food, and

[109] Judy Huenneke believes that by this point, Milmine was no longer involved with the project, and indeed, I was unable to unearth any documentation that suggests otherwise.

endure the changes of the seasons, our relation to the material universe has changed because she defines matter as an illusion" (181). Elsewhere, she does a deft job at explicating some of Mrs. Eddy's notoriously opaque prose:

> "Repulsion, attraction, cohesion, and powers supposed to belong to matter are constituents of mind," Mrs. Eddy says. By this she does not mean that these forces exist, for us, in our minds, but that at some time in the dim past "mortal mind" imagined matter and imagined these properties in it. Christ, she says, was able to walk upon the water and to roll away the stone of the sepulcher because he had overcome the human *belief* in the laws of gravity. (181)

The writer also undertakes an explanation of Eddy's peculiar diction, drawing a line from the author of *Science and Health*'s method of interpreting scripture to her unique use of certain words:

> This method of "spiritual interpretation" has given Mrs. Eddy the habit of a highly empirical use of English. At the back of her book, "Science and Health," there is a glossary in which a long list of serviceable old English words are said to mean very especial things. The word "bridegroom" means "spiritual understanding"; "death" means "an illusion"; "evening" means "mistiness of mortal thought"; "mother" means God, etc., etc. The seventh commandment, Mrs. Eddy insists, is an injunction against adulterating Christian Science, although she also admits the meaning ordinarily attached to it. In the *Journal* of November, 1889, there is a long discussion of the tencommandments by the editor, in which he takes up both personal chastity and the Pure Food laws under the command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (183)

She also explains for the reader the relationship between Eddy's theology and therapeutics, but states that the innovation of her approach to healing is merely its extremity: "That the mind is able, in a large degree, to prevent or to cause sickness and even death, all thinking people admit. Mrs. Eddy's fundamental propositions are that death is wholly unnecessary and that the body and the organs of the body have nothing to do with life" (183). And it is from this point on that the writer of this installment, presumably Cather, picks up on Milmine's central thesis, that Eddy was, at best, a

popularizer of ideas that originated in better—usually male—minds, that her chief skill was in her ability to turn these theories into a paying proposition, or "personal property" (188). The article declares Mrs. Eddy a "patronizing and platitudinous expositor" devoid of both intelligence and "religious feeling" (186). The one "original elemental contribution to Quimbyism," she suggests, is the belief in Malicious Animal Magnetism, the mental power that enables human beings to reach out in thought and harm others (186). The writer declares this a "superstition born of her own vindictiveness and distrust" (186). Yet her final word on the subject of Mrs. Eddy, the thought that concludes a series that spanned a year and a half, reflects Milmine's pragmatic efforts to dispassionately evaluate Mrs. Eddy based on the fruits of her labors rather than an emotional reaction to her less savory qualities:

> On the theoretical side, Mrs. Eddy's contribution to mental healing has been, in the main, fallacious, pseudodoxal, and absurd, but upon the practical side she has been wonderfully efficient. New movements are usually launched and old ideas are revivified, not through the efforts of a group of people, but through one person. These dynamic personalities have not always conformed to our highest ideals; their effectiveness has not always been associated with a large intelligence or with nobility of character. Not infrequently it has been true of them—as it seems to be true of Mrs. Eddy—that their power was generated in the ferment of an inharmonious and violent nature. But, for practical purposes, it is only fair to measure them by their actual accomplishment and by the machinery they have set in motion. (189)

Yet Cather seems to have also revised Milmine's thesis in order to make it more acceptable to the *McClure's* audience. As I have suggested before, Milmine seemed to be deeply in sympathy with the Quimby acolytes who were busy making a case against Mrs. Eddy. Her portrait of Phineas Quimby, which is reflected in the final version, paints him as a humble, self-sacrificing man, who freely allowed others access to his life's work and who was more concerned with alleviating suffering than personal gain. This, of course, is contrasted to the biography's portrayal of Eddy's Machiavellian attempts to retain

absolute control over the dissemination of her ideas and writings and the behavior of her followers, a reflection of the muckraker's fundamental suspicion of monopolistic greed.

Yet Milmine's draft takes this assessment of Quimby a bit outside what would have been considered the mainstream. Quimby proponents believed that their idol had himself independently discovered and resurrected a primal truth that had the power to transform the world. Their issue wasn't necessarily with the central precepts of Mrs. Eddy's philosophy but with her failure to acknowledge Quimby's prior discoveries. In the final chapter of the long draft, Milmine begins, "Christian Science, as the writer understands it, contains a central truth, and expresses a popular philosophy. The idea at its center is not essentially different from that exploited by some of the ancient and modern philosophers, and its theory is akin to the mysticism of the Orient" (410). Compare this to the revision, which places Christian Science not in the tradition of some ancient wisdom but in the context of developing scientific approaches to psycho-therapeutics. She declares that, "It is the future of psycho-therapeutics that will determine the future of Christian Science. If 'Mind Cure,' 'Christian Psychology,' and regular physicians offer the benefits of suggestive treatment in a more rational and direct way than does Christian Science, Mrs. Eddy's church will find in them very formidable competition" (189). The book, which was updated for its 1909 release,[110] takes this a step further, arguing that "the permanent value of suggestive therapeutics will ultimately be determined, not by the inexperienced or overzealous in any walk of life, but through the slow and patient experiments of medical science" (485)

Similarly, both the draft and the articles credit Quimby, whom the draft describes as possessing "a zeal for 'wisdom' and exact knowledge," by which he "thereby founded

[110] The precise circumstances of the book's publication and who, precisely, had a hand in bringing it up date is unknown at this point.

a new school of healing" (410-11). The Milmine draft essentially adopts the mantle of delivering Quimby's legacy to the world, while the final articles adopt a more detached tone:

> But all the while that Mrs. Eddy was energetically copyrighting, and pruning, and expelling, and disciplining, that other stream which came from Quimby, through Dr. Evans and through Julius Dresser and his wife, was slowly and quietly doing its work. Mind Cure and New Thought grew up side by side with Christian Science. As organizations they were not nearly so effective, and their ranks, like Mrs. Eddy's, were often darkened by the adventuress and the battered soldier of fortune. But the Mental healers and the New Thought healers treated the sick on exactly the same principle which Mrs. Eddy's successful healers employed. (188)

Christian Science, the writer argues, is only one means to the same end.

We are left with the tautological conclusion that evidence of Willa Cather's skill as an editor may very well lie in the fact that it is nearly impossible to tell where Milmine ends and Cather begins. I believe it is reasonable to suppose that in addition to making Milmine's original material more exciting to read, Cather refined her arguments in such a way that reduced the draft's devotion to P.P. Quimby's special genius, which would have seemed odd to a good portion of the audience for *McClure's*.

S.S. McClure

Though there is no evidence that McClure personally edited the series in any capacity, there is abundant evidence to suggest that he had a vision for the project that shaped the way in which his editors presented the final product. Amy Ahearn indicates that at least some of the installments were subject to his final approval. McClure, she says, shaped Cather's prose style in the later issues, based on his belief that "'plain facts' were most persuasive to readers," discouraging "his reporters from engaging in 'literary' styles" (22). The problem is that the drafts and letters contained in the Milmine file do

not support such a portrayal. For one thing, the very straightforward prose of Milmine's early drafts, her long unbroken passages of direct quotation, wound up being *embellished* by the later editorial interventions, not, as Ahearn suggests, stripped down. The biography rather clumsily negotiates very fine line between commitment to the facts and the commercial and artistic imperative of telling a good story. The advertisement quoted in the epigraph, in fact, is a good example of that tension. The same paragraph that declares the series to be the product of "gathering data," also states, "The whole story of her [Mrs. Eddy's] life is a romance" ("The Life of Mrs. Eddy). For McClure and others involved, there may have been no contradiction in this juxtaposition of realism and "literariness." Indeed, from their perspective, Mrs. Eddy's life w*as* a romance, and a salacious one at that. By unveiling its tawdry details in spectacular tabloid style, they were merely presenting the truth. Wilson argues that in the world of muckraking, and at *McClure's* in particular, this tendency was a feature rather than a bug. According to Lincoln Steffens, "Mr. McClure was interested in facts, startling facts, not in philosophical generalizations" (Qtd. in Wilson, 190). Ray Stannard Baker confirms, "that it was not the evils of politics and business, or the threat to our democratic system, that impressed him most, but the excitement and interest and sensation of uncovering a world of unrecognized evils—shocking people" (Qtd. in Wilson, 190).[111]

The shake-up at McClure's may very well have been the impetus for getting the Eddy project going again in 1906. The exodus of partners and editors was famously instigated by McClure's declaration, "I am *McClure's*," a statement of his intent to run

[111] In this section, Wilson also cites the 1917-1921 edition of the *Cambridge History of American Literature*, which tellingly states that muckraking "consisted in adhering strictly to the literal truth, but in so arranging and proportioning statements of fact as to show most disadvantageously some person, corporation, or other organization of which the public was predisposed to believe the worst."

the publishing house as he saw fit (168-9).[112] The reports of Farlow and Wilson on the inner workings of the magazine suggest that *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy* may have been one (of perhaps many) of the objects over which McClure struggled for editorial control. Wilson indicates in a July 1906 letter to Farlow that McClure was being restrained from publishing the kind of attack on Mrs. Eddy that he desired by the "more conservative" individuals surrounding him. As Wilson (Eddy's secretary) states:

> To me it is patent that Mr. McClure is personally disposed to approach the subject of Christian Science as an antagonist and for the purpose of doing what he would call "showing it up." This, notwithstanding that Mr. Sisson, a close acquaintance and former business associate, has undertaken personally to rid Mr. McClure of the popular misconceptions of Christian Science, and still whatever prejudice would influence him, by a frank, and I am sure, convincing statement of the benign influence Christian Science has exerted in his own experience and of its wonderful results apparent to Mr. Sisson on all sides. (H.C. Wilson, 18 July 1906)

Farlow and Wilson did, indeed, try their utmost to keep the project from ever coming to fruition. They claimed to have obtained, at various points, permission from John Sanborn Phillips to read the manuscript before it was sent to press. As suspicious as this behavior might seem, their efforts appear to have been motivated by their (entirely warranted) belief that the primary sources behind Milmine's work were avowed public enemies of Christian Science, not necessarily from a cynical desire to suppress any established but potentially unflattering truths. If anything, their repeated efforts to reach out to the partners and editors of the magazine—which included tracking McClure to his home in New York after being turned away from his Boston office on a couple of occasions—renders disingenuous the later claim in the Editorial Announcement that "Practically no assistance can be obtained from Christian Scientists themselves" (216). It is

[112]This included embarking on commercial ventures that other stakeholders, including Phillips and Tarbell, saw as both potentially ruinous and counter to their anti-monopolistic values.

understandable, however, that McClure chafed under what he saw as the interference of the Church's Board of Directors in a journalistic endeavor. Therefore, when the partners and editors split, and everyone who had objected to any aspect of the publication of the Eddy series left the picture, McClure was free to do as he pleased. According to Mr. Wilson, Will Irwin, then managing editor of the magazine still had misgivings about the series, as did a Mr. Randolph, who attended a meeting with McClure and the representatives from the Church and who was reportedly among those being considered to rewrite Milmine's manuscript. Yet McClure's control of Irwin and Randolph appears to have been considerably stronger than it was over Phillips and Baker. As time went on, Wilson and Farlow came to the realization that they were being shut out of the proceedings, and in late 1906, the chain of correspondence stops until after the final installments of the series had appeared in print.

I believe that Farlow and Wilson were well-intentioned in their attempts to prevent the series from being published. They were, after all, attempting to protect a beloved, elderly woman from what did in fact become an increasingly vicious and invasive attempt on the part of various journalistic organizations to uncover the tawdriest possible details about her life, many of which were fabricated out of whole cloth. It also appears that their efforts to influence the editors never went beyond holding meetings with the principals and praying about the outcome. That said, it is possible that the appearance of interfering with *McClure's* quest for the truth made McClure himself less inclined to deal with Church representatives in good faith. In fact, an incident following the publication of the series reveals the degree to which McClure's commitment to fairness and faithful documentation had been compromised by preconceived ideas about Christian Scientists and a commitment to polemic.

At the announcement of the biography, *McClure's* had promised to allow Christian Scientists to offer a rebuttal. They had, after all, extended such an offer to Rockefeller following the series on Standard Oil, though it had been politely declined. The original scheme was to run two articles immediately following the series: the piece entitled "100 Christian Science Cures" by the physician Richard Cabot, an expert on nervous ailments and a piece by an as yet unnamed Christian Scientist. Yet in the summer of 1908, the former article appeared while the latter did not. At that point, John V. Dittemore wrote McClure himself asking why. McClure replied that while a couple of articles on the topic had been submitted by Christian Scientists, none had met the exacting literary standards of the magazine. Dittemore wrote to ask if he might find someone to write an acceptable article, a proposition to which McClure agreed. Dittemore then solicited Edward Kimball, a prominent intellectual voice within the movement who had written rebuttals to Mark Twain's articles in *Cosmopolitan* and *North American Review.* If anyone was qualified to present the Christian Scientists' case in a manner that might be intelligible and palatable to a broad audience (the fact that he was a man certainly helped in this context), it would have been Edward Kimball.

On October 31, 1908, Dittemore tells Kimball what came of this endeavor. He reports having a long conference with McClure and Cather. At that meeting, McClure revised the original agreement, stating that instead of an article rebutting Cabot, "what he wanted was an article setting out the line and page on which his history [the original biographical series] had made any misstatements and the evidence to prove the case" (Dittemore, 31 October 1908). When presented with his original letter, he fumed that "if the article was 'readable' he would take it, but that he would turn the whole matter over to Miss Cather" (Dittemore, 31 October 1908). It is here that Dittemore represents Cather as wanting to do the right thing but constrained both by McClure himself and by her own

negative opinions of Mrs. Eddy. "The mental 'feel' of the whole office," Dittemore reports,

> [W]as unmistakably that this article did not want to be published. They even had the effrontery to voice the argument that they doubted whether the literary merit of the article was up to their standard, but this was met by reminding them of your Cosmopolitan article and others, and they seemed to perceive that they were arguing against something that had not even been inspected.
>
> I left the matter on this basis: That Mr. McClure had indicated his desire two years ago to finish his "history" with two articles, one by a specialist on nervous diseases and one by a Christian Scientist that he had fulfilled half of his intention when he published Dr. Cabot's recent effort, and that it was up to him to take this or leave it; that the Christian Scientists did not propose to have him dictate to them how they should state their own case; that this article had been prepared at his request and solicitation and that the question of his integrity and honesty of purpose in the whole matter would be settled when he gave me his decision. (Dittemore, 31 October 1908).

The article was ultimately rejected, McClure stating that it was not up to his vaguely defined "standard." Dittemore, concluding that his efforts on this matter were in vain, simply withdrew from the field.

This exchange between McClure, Dittemore, and Kimball points to one of the possible reasons why Cather was associated with this particular series for so long. In addition to serving as the primary editor, it seems clear that she was also acting as the public face for the magazine for business pertaining to the Eddy series. As a woman with no particular qualms with religion from the hinterlands of America, whose "interests lay in literature rather than in reform," Cather was an ideal face for a controversial series about a female religious leader.

CONCLUSION

While the documentary evidence discredits the scholarly consensus that *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy* is an "early Cather," this text should still be of interest to literary scholars and even Cather scholars. Cather was most definitely involved as leader of the editorial team beginning in early 1907 and left her mark on the final product. Without question, this project helped launch Cather's literary career, as she was promoted to Managing Editor and placed in contact with some important professional influences (including Sarah Orne Jewett) as a result of her exemplary work on this series. And while the overenthusiastic claim for Cather's sole or primary authorship is, in a word, mistaken, perhaps it is a happy mistake. For without the attention of Cather scholars, we most certainly would not have a current edition of a rich, heterogeneous text that should be of broader interest to historians and literary critics alike because of what it can tell us about the evolution of investigative journalism in the early 20th century, public expectations for a magazine like *McClure's*, and the status of religion, particularly heterodox movements, in American culture (*McClure's* would go on to publish a series on Mormons almost immediately after the Christian Science series). A deeper comprehension of way the biography deals with Eddy and her movement and what that meant in its historical moment is significant in helping us understand the role Christian Science played in American culture and the expectations placed on literary figures who undertook the work of debunking it. Finally, it ought to be of broader interest to feminist scholars for the simple reason that it involved capable female journalists writing about the most famous woman of their time, attempting to come to reasonable conclusions about a female personality who inspired, alternately, worship, fear, and contempt.

In this chapter, I have read this text symptomatically, as an artifact that does represent the sincere efforts of journalists to arrive at evidence-based conclusions but that

also reflects the limitations of that pursuit and the cultural anxieties that informed it. Unfortunately, the consensus surrounding Cather's authorship of the text and the desire on the part of many literary scholars to celebrate her contribution has tended to shut off a healthy amount of skepticism about the claims the text makes. Because Cather scholars who have written about it at length have tended to focus on its biographical importance and influence on her later work, they have tended to show little cognizance of the portentous debate into which this text entered and have tended to accept its most contentious claims as if they were settled fact. Christian Science was regarded by many as a major social problem, and this biographical series pronounces upon the most controversial and disputed aspects of Mary Baker Eddy's life and work with what the best current scholarship on those issues regards as dubious authority. Despite the wealth of research devoted to the history of Christian Science by academic researchers like Gill and Schoepflin, the Nebraska edition of *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy* is frequently the only primary or secondary source cited when literary scholars talk about Christian Science.[113] Furthermore, *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy* has enjoyed the status of ur-text for almost every biographical treatment of the founder of Christian Science over the past century. And, indeed, the publication of the 1993 Nebraska edition has helped to

[113] David Porter's chapter on the Eddy series in his otherwise masterful critical biography of Cather is one example, as it tends to treat *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy* not only as an interesting work by Cather but as an absolute authority on matters of fact, not requiring any further corroboration from current scholarly work on the movement. Similarly, Michael Shelden's exploration of Twain's late career invokes the *McClure's* series (citing Stouck and Bohlke and assuming that Cather is the author) in order to confirm that Twain's portrayal of Christian Science was rooted in fact rather than emotion: "It is sometimes suggested that Twain's criticisms of Eddy were the product of a curmudgeon's bitterness or misogynistic rage. But such reasoning wouldn't explain the similar thoughts of the *McClure's* contributor, who was a promising young female writer with no predisposition to attack Christian Science or its leader. For more than a year Twain's neighbor in Manhattan, Willa Cather, had been investigating Eddy's career for *McClure's*, conducting much of her work in Boston, the church's home base. As a result of her own independent research, she had come to share Twain's conviction that the founder had misled her flock and had never, in Cather's words, 'produced an original idea on her own account'" (68-9).

perpetuate its status as an authoritative, even scholarly treatment of Mrs. Eddy's life and work. As Gillian Gill states,

> The Milmine biography has fundamentally influenced succeeding work, and thanks to the University of Nebraska edition it is still influential. Milmine and the *McClure's* group claimed to have interviewed hundreds of witnesses who knew Mrs. Eddy, and this reported testimony has achieved extraordinary significance. In any publication not written by a faithful Christian Scientist, Milmine is quoted as the single trustworthy source of information, especially on the first half of Mrs. Eddy's life. (567)

The possibility that Cather's supposed "authorship" has helped to solidify, even augment, the biography's ongoing influence on both popular and scholarly perceptions of Christian Science means that a more balanced assessment of her actual involvement in its production has importance not only to our understanding of Cather and her career but also to this project's larger questions concerning the role that literary figures have played in cultural debates about Eddy and her movement.

CHAPTER FIVE—The Tragedy of Desire: Christian Science in Theodore Dreiser's *The "Genius"*

He once stood in a morgue and saw human bodies apparently dissolving into a kind of chemical mush and he had said to himself then how ridiculous it was to assume that life meant anything much to the forces which were doing these things. Great chemical and physical forces were at work, which permitted, accidentally, perhaps, some little shadow-play, which would soon pass. But, oh, its presence—how sweet it was!
--Theodore Dreiser, The "Genius" *(682)*

In 1918, Upton Sinclair released a self-published manuscript entitled *The Profits of Religion*, an impassioned screed against sham religious figures fleecing the poor and deceiving the ignorant.[114] Virtually no religious group was left untouched by Sinclair's invective—he criticized the Catholics, the Anglicans, the Protestants, the Charity Leagues, the Mormons, the Fundamentalists—but he reservds a special sort of vitriol for Christian Science, calling it "the most characteristic of American religious contributions" (257). He attributed its widespread popularity to rank ignorance: "Just as Billy Sunday is the price we pay for failing to educate our base-ball players, so Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy is the price we pay for failing to educate our farmer's daughters" (257). Characteristic of many of Eddy's learned critics, Sinclair had no problem with the concept of mental healing, just the way that Christian Scientists implement it. He confessed to experimenting "with mental healing—enough to satisfy myself that the subconscious mind which controls our physical functions can be powerfully influenced by the will" (258). No, Sinclair objects to Eddy's "flapping of metaphysical wings" in *Science and Health* and what he sees as the Church of Christ, Scientist's particular "brand of Mammon" (259, 261).

---

[114] The act of self-publication was in itself a rhetorical act for Sinclair: "I publish the book myself, so that it may be available at the lowest possible price. I am giving my time and energy, in return for one thing which you may give me—the joy of speaking a true word and getting it heard" (v). This is meant to contrast the high prices that he accuses various religious sects of charging for the "truths" of their holy books.

A few months following the appearance of Sinclair's book, Stephen Alison—a Christian Scientist, socialist,[115] and co-editor of the New Orleans-based periodical *The Christian Scientist*—accused Sinclair of aggressively misunderstanding Christian Science theology and practice and in the process deputized another famous author, journalist, and social justice advocate into his argument:

> I suppose that you do read sometimes the novels of other novelists, and it is by no means unlikely that you have read "The Genius," by Theodore Dreiser, a great novel which has been ruthlessly suppressed by a tyrannical Mrs. Grundyism that tolerates so much infamous trash; but it is quite obvious that Dreiser's work was suppressed because he saw so completely through the conventional lies of our civilization and did not bow down to nor adore them. Several chapters toward the end of "The Genius" deal with Eugene Witla's experiences in connection with the application of Christian Science to the problems of his existence; and Dreiser has at least endeavored to honestly comprehend the message of Christian Science. He does not make the mistake of confusing it with hypnotism or the operation of the "sub-conscious mind." In case you do not care to read more carefully the volume of "Science and health" which you purchased,—to get "The Genius" cost me twice as much—if you have Dreiser's novel or can borrow it from someone who has it, for, of course, it is not to be found in the libraries,—it would be well for you to review the chapters in it dealing with Christian Science. I do not say that they are perfect, but they show a sympathetic and intelligent understanding and he discerns the difference between the spiritual and metaphysical conception of God and Infinite Mind, and the feeble counterfeit belief in the operation of human will-power, as manifested in connection with the human mind. Dreiser may be more of a realist than an artist in words, but he is at least desirous of getting his facts straight and takes pains to do so. (3.1: 2)[116]

---

[115] In back issues of *The Christian Scientist*, Alison refers to his activities in the socialist movement in Great Britain, where he also contributed to socialist periodicals. Alison claims to have never formally affiliated with the First Church of Christ, Scientist, and his publication was not endorsed by the organization that Eddy founded.

[116] Sinclair's response to the Open Letter appears in the October 1918 edition of *The Christian Scientist* and reads as follows: "Dear Comrade—I have read with interest your friendly open letter. I could not say all I had to say about Christian Science in the magazine. You will find more in the book. I have read *Science and Health*. I cannot go with it because I don't believe in any sort of metaphysics. I have given my reasons in the latter part of 'The Profits of Religion.' I went through the whole game when I was in college—the metaphysics game I mean. There is nothing in it for me. Sincerely, U. Sinclair" (3.2: 1). Alison prints his own very lengthy response.

Though Dreiser himself never converted to Christian Science as his sisters and first wife did, Alison had ample reason to believe that he had found in the famous author a fellow traveler, or at the very least an interlocutor between Christian Scientists and the world of skeptical literary and intellectual elites. The final sixty pages of *The "Genius"*—derisively called "the Christian Science fugue" by Dreiser's friend Edward H. Smith—contain a thorough exegesis of Mary Baker Eddy's writings and place them in conversation with the other metaphysical and scientific theories that preoccupied Dreiser at the time. The novel fictionalizes his nervous breakdown amid the fallout of *Sister Carrie*,[117] the collapse of his marriage to Sarah "Jug" White, and his abortive affair with Thelma Cudlipp. During that final crisis, "Dreiser and Jug had consulted with [Christian Science] practitioners in the manner of contemporary couples visiting a marriage counselor," according to biographer Richard Lingemann (264). The author's interest in Christian Science turns up at various points in both his fictional and autobiographical writings but especially in this final section of *The "Genius"*.

It is difficult to imagine how Dreiser's naturalism, with its vaunted obsession with the material and rejection of a higher moral order, could accommodate something like Christian Science, with its radical denial of the physical world, its metaphysical complexity, and its rejection of sexuality, a famously prominent concern in Dreiser's fiction. Indeed, Mary Baker Eddy argued that sexuality, reproduction, and physical desire were "errors" and illusions just like any other physical pathology. Desire had both sexual and economic dimensions in the Victorian era, as the privileged classes tried to determine

---

[117] The distribution of which was ruthlessly suppressed by Dreiser's own publisher, disillusioning the nascent author leading to a ten-year creative drought that completely impoverished him. See Chapters 26-46 of Lingemann or Chapters 7 and 8 of Loving, *The Last Titan.*

whether the future of white middle class prosperity lay in the limiting and restraining of desire—the act of saving and delaying economic as well as sexual gratification—or in its full and unfettered expression. As such, many social justice and woman's movement activists found common cause with Christian Scientists and other mind curists in attempting to ameliorate what they saw as a source of human suffering, particularly among women. Therefore, given the context in which he and Jug's consultations with the Christian Scientist practitioner began, I argue that Dreiser was considering Christian Science as a possible solution to the problem of desire. Despite his noted reputation as a philanderer and materialist, Dreiser was haunted, especially in his youth, by a fear of desire's overwhelming and destructive power. That ambivalence toward the desires of the body is an extension of his lifelong ambivalence toward American individualism and the desire for wealth. In this chapter I will place my argument in the context of current Dreiser criticism, demonstrate through primary evidence Dreiser's lifelong interest in the teachings of Mary Baker Eddy and how that might prompt us to re-read his legacy, explain Progressive Era attitudes toward desire as an economic, physical, and moral construct, and show how all of these threads come together in *The "Genius."*

GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND THE CRITICAL RECEPTION OF *THE "GENIUS"*

The "Genius" was neither a critical nor popular success, and as Rachel Bowlby indicates, "such sales as it did have were inflated by the notoriety that followed from suppression through the influence of a society for moral reform, and subsequent republication a decade later" (72). This novel continues to be known less for its qualities or its content than for the scandal that surrounded its publication, the onslaught of "Mrs. Grundyism" that Stephen Alison mentions in his open letter to Sinclair. The author's frank treatment of Eugene Witla's sexual escapades provoked a campaign for suppression

that Dreiser ultimately won. As Jerome Loving remarks in his review of the Dreiser Edition of *The Genius*, the novel's eventual, belated publication "marked the general demise of puritanical censorship in literary America. In a way, this novel did for American literature what *Sister Carrie* had done—loosened the stranglehold of American moralists" (84). This is an ironic legacy for a novel that was, as Clare Eby points out, riddled with evidence of sexual conservatism and sentimentality—especially in the early stages of its composition—and features a hero contemplating a conversion to the famously asexual religion of Mary Baker Eddy in the aftermath of a personally catastrophic affair. The scandal surrounding the novel's publication has, perhaps, encouraged readers to find in its narrative the triumph of masculine sexual liberation when, in truth, the novel is riddled with ambivalence about the consequences of unfettered male desire.

In her essay for *Theodore Dreiser: Beyond Naturalism*, Irene Gammel critiques this standard interpretation of Dreiser's legacy, pointing to the conventionality of sexual relationships in Dreiser's novels, in which characters—particularly women, but men also—are so frequently punished for their exploits. *The "Genius"* is no exception. Eugene's prolonged bout of neurasthenia is blamed on sexual activity, his final—unconsummated—affair ends disastrously, and his wife dies tragically in childbirth. In spite of all this, "Dreiser has gained the stature of a literary French Marianne, who, by waving the flag of sexual liberation in his battle against the bulwarks of American literary 'puritanism,' has firmly established sex as a discursive fact" (Gogol 32). Using Foucault's critique of the "sexual liberation" thesis, Gammel argues that such portrayals of Dreiser as sexual emancipator "assume the existence of sexuality as an innate, bodily fact, a fact that is presumed to be recoverable—like a *Ding an sich*—underneath layers of psychological repressions and literary censorship" (Gogol 32). It is more productive, she

suggests, to consider the ways in which Dreiser produces and represents sexuality in his novels rather than listing all the ways in which he set it free.[118]

As Gammel indicates, the sexual liberation thesis as it applies to Dreiser's novels tends to re-inscribe conventional stereotypes about male and female sexuality. The sexuality in need of liberation is typically male, while women are portrayed as either passive receptors or frigid restrictors of that sexuality. H.L. Mencken even invoked such stereotypical categories in his review of *The "Genius"* as a novel inhabited by

> [T]wo Witlas—the artist who is trying to create something … and the sentimentalist whose longing is to be loved, coddled, kept at ease. This conflict, of course, is at the bottom of the misery of all men above the grade of car conductor, barber, waiter or Sunday school superintendent. On the one hand there is the desire to exert power, to do something that has not been done before, to bend reluctant material to one's will, and on the other hand there is the desire for comfort, for well-being, for an easy life. This latter desire … is visualized by women. Women are the conservative and conservators, the enemies of hazard and innovation, the compromizers and temporizers. That very capacity for mothering which is their supreme gift is the greatest of all foes to masculine enterprise. Most men, alas, yield to it. In the common phrase, they marry and settle down. (Qtd. in Bowlby 75)

Rachel Bowlby's chapter on the novel in *Just Looking* explores the tension that Mencken identified between two Witlas, between masculine economic enterprise and feminized sentimentality, arguing that the novel seeks to construct a modern, liberated male subject as a successful realist artist and titan of industry: "Thus is the 'sentimentalist' side of the artist dismissed as a sexual aberration, functionally equivalent to the 'morbid conscience' against which the virile realist must manifest the strength required 'if wealth was to come'" (78). For Bowlby, *The "Genius"* dramatizes Victorian debates about the gendered nature of desire, about the role of men as producers and women as conservators.

---

[118] Florence Dore also produces a counter-interpretation of the representation of sexuality in early twentieth-century fiction, including Dreiser's *Sister Carrie.*

Yet, as Donald Pizer demonstrates in his 2008 article on the novel, such a reading ignores certain conservative influences on the novel. Pizer, for example, reveals the impact of Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character*, a work that strenuously advocated male sexual restraint, on the novel's final chapters. Likewise, if the narrative trajectory of *The "Genius"* is understood to be one of a hero overcoming his sentimental tendencies and progressing toward Mencken's vision of the active, desiring male artist, then the "Christian Science fugue" at the very end represents a relapse or, at the very least, a very strange side trip.

This problem of the novel's legacy versus its content is even more pronounced when one lays the published 1915 John Lane edition of the novel alongside the Holograph Manuscript version of 1911, on which Eby's scholarly edition is based. The 1911 manuscript not only contains far more Christian Science jargon (including many references to "mortal mind" versus "divine mind") but suggests a Dreiser who is "attracted to conventional solutions and sentimental outcomes" and a hero who is capable of settling down both romantically and metaphysically (764). As Eby indicates, "It reveals a Dreiser whose mature ideas of self, masculinity, artistic achievement, and worldly success were still in the process of formation" (762). Eby's work on the 1911 holograph has illuminated the ways in which Dreiser often did not live up to his legacy as a "hard-headed, uncompromising realist" and sexual varietist, but I argue that his ambivalence about sexuality, masculinity, and metaphysics are no more resolved in the 1915 edition than they are in the 1911 holograph (763). Ultimately, understanding the presence of Christian Science in the published version of the novel is essential to better understanding Dreiser.

DREISER'S INTEREST IN CHRISTIAN SCIENCE: AN OVERVIEW

Before delving into the novel itself, it will be helpful to document Dreiser's relationship with and attitude toward Christian Science throughout his life in order to better establish a context. Mame and Sylvia Dreiser, Theodore's sisters, both converted to Christian Science as adults, and Sylvia eventually became a practitioner (Loving 7). It is not clear when the author first became interested in Christian Science himself. As early as 1901, however, Dreiser mentioned Christian Science approvingly in his *Harper's* profile of artist William Louis Sonntag, Jr., later anthologized in *Twelve Men*: "He had a fine mind, philosophically and logically considered. He could reason upon all things, from the latest mathematical theorem to Christian Science. Naturally, being so much of an individualist, he was drifting toward a firm belief in the latter, and was never weary of discussing the power of the mind—its wondrous ramifications and influences" (*Magazine*, 275). Where many of his contemporaries found obfuscation and incoherence, Dreiser consistently presented Eddy's metaphysics as a challenging and sophisticated puzzle. Dreiser references the theory of the mind's power to overcome aging and death in Lester Kane's deathbed scenes in *Jennie Gerhardt* (1911), asserting that "man, even under his mortal illusion, is organically built to last five times the period of his maturity and would last as long as the spirit that is in him if he but knew that it is spirit which persists, that age is an illusion, that there is no death" (403). His memoirs also reveal that he was fond of discussing and debating Christian Science with friends. In *A Hoosier Holiday* (1916), he speaks of discussing the central principle of Christian Science with a friend who had recently converted:

> Then Franklin and I sat back in the cushions and began to discuss [automobile] blowouts in general and the mystic power of the mind to control such matters—the esoteric or metaphysical knowledge that there can be no such thing as evil and that blowouts really cannot occur. This brings me again to Christian Science, which somehow hung over this

> whole tour, not so much as a religious irritant as a pleasant safeguard. It wasn't religious or obtrusive at all. Franklin, as I have said, is inclined to believe that there is no evil, though he is perfectly willing to admit that material appearances seem all against that assumption at time. (52)

Just a few years earlier, in *A Traveler at Forty* (1913), he records an instance in which he recommended Christian Science to Mrs. Grant Allen and her family:

> On the way home, I remember, we discussed Christian Science and its relative physical merits in a world where all creeds and doctrines blow, apparently, so aimlessly about. Like all sojourners in this fitful fever of existence, Mrs. Grant Allen and her daughter and son, the cheerful Jerrard Grant Allen, were not without their troubles, so much so that being the intelligent woman that she was and quite aware of the subtleties and uncertainties of religious dogma, she was nevertheless eager to find something upon which she could lean, spiritually speaking—the strong arm, let us say, of an Almighty, no less, who would perchance heal her of her griefs and ills. … I think I established the metaphysical basis of life quite ably, for myself, and urged Mrs. Grant Allen to take up Christian Science. (244-5)

Much later, in a July 1940 letter to Dorothy Payne Davis, he would place Mrs. Eddy at the level of Gautama: "Buddha and Mary Baker Eddy affirmed an *over* or *one* universal soul," he wrote, "itself *being* and so *containing* all wisdom and all creative power" (Qtd. in Zanine 181). Dreiser clearly regarded Christian Science as a balm for the suffering soul, a spiritual recourse that was free from many of the trappings and limitations of the major organized religions. It was a form of spirituality that even the educated and skeptical, those "aware of the subtleties and uncertainties of religious dogma" could lean on in a time of trouble.

In *Mechanism and Mysticism*, Louis Zanine discusses Dreiser's fascination with Christian Science in the context of his other abiding interests in occult phenomena. He was fascinated by spiritualism, a subject to which he devoted a six-part series in *The Delineator* called "Are the Dead Alive?" (Lingemann 249).[119] He was also quite

[119] This series was not well received. It was considered blasphemous by many religious readers and preposterous by skeptics. He was ultimately forced to withdraw the series.

superstitious, a tendency which he documents in *The "Genius"* when Eugene Witla, his surrogate, becomes obsessed with bad omens—"He found that when doors squeaked, people were apt to get sick in the houses where they were; and a black dog howling in front of a house was a sure sign of death"—and visits psychics in the midst of his neurasthenic distress. The Christian Science passage from *A Hoosier Holiday* also occurs just after Dreiser and Franklin have had an intense discussion about luck signs. For Dreiser, however, these curiosities were not incompatible with his rigorous interests in modern science. His readings in *Science and Health*, his visits with psychics, and his fascination with theoretical physics, biology and Spencer were all of a piece, all part of his interest in the hidden workings of the universe. As Zanine argues, he remained fascinated by but ultimately dissatisfied with the modern scientific establishment "as he realized that scientists did not share his interest in the supernatural. He eventually grew impatient because they refused to investigate the mysterious, occult phenomena that so fascinated him" (141). When Eugene first encounters Christian Science following the collapse of his career, his marriage, and his affair with Suzanne Dale, he finds himself contemplating the human condition:

> He was one of those men who are metaphysically inclined. All his life he had been speculating on the subtleties of mortal existence, reading Spencer, Kant, Spinoza, at odd moments, and particularly such men as Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, Lord Avebury, Alfred Russel Wallace, and latterly Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir William Crookes, trying to find out by the inductive, naturalistic method just what life was. (689)

He brings Mary Baker Eddy's theories together with "chemistry and physics" to try to explain the problem of morality, of where the moral laws that govern society come from. He finds confluences between *Science and Health* and Carlyle, who "had once said that 'matter itself—the outer world of matter, was either nothing, or else a product due to man's mind'" (694). He also compares Christian Science to theories about cell biology

and physics, quoting at length from Edgar Lucien Larkin on the nature of invisible particles and Alfred Russel Wallace on the hidden processes that govern the workings of the human body and the universe:

> This [Wallace's] very peculiar and apparently progressive statement in regard to the conclusion which naturalistic science had revealed in regard to the universe struck Eugene as pretty fair confirmation of Mrs. Eddy's contention that all was mind and its infinite variety and that the only difference between her and the British scientific naturalists was that they contended for an ordered hierarchy which could only rule and manifest itself according to its own ordered or self-imposed laws, which they could perceive or detect, whereas, she contended for a governing spirit which was everywhere and would act through ordered laws and powers of its own arrangement. (699)

While Dreiser (and Eugene) would ultimately reject Christian Science's "denial of the existence of evil in the universe, he agreed completely with Mrs. Eddy's assertion that 'there is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter. All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-All'" (Zanine 180). Furthermore, Dreiser believed that "the pantheistic conception of an immanent creator was completely consistent with the findings of science" (Zanine 181).

Despite their seeming coherence, such beliefs still placed the author outside of the mainstream. His eccentricity in this regard distressed his friends and colleagues, who saw in these flights of fancy the last remaining traces of the Indiana rube in this enlightened, sophisticated visionary. H.L. Mencken was horrified to find Christian Science magazines in the home of Dreiser and Jug when he visited them in 1911, assuming that Jug was "a deluded believer. To him, Mary Baker Eddyism was the worst kind of pious snake oil" (Lingemannn 264). For this reason, "Dreiser apparently hadn't told Mencken of his own interest in Christian Science, or else passed it off as mere scientific curiosity, knowing the other's violent dislike of any sort of 'spiritualism'" (Lingemannn 264). Mencken panned *The "Genius",* in his review for *The Smart Set*, an event that marked the beginning of a

hostile period in Mencken and Dreiser's relationship, but Mencken was hardly the only colleague who was perplexed by the novel and concerned about Dreiser's metaphysical bent.

In January of 1921, Edward H. Smith wrote Dreiser a letter about the author's religious and superstitious tendencies:

> I fear me, and with very deep concern, that Theodore Dreiser's mind turns ever a little more toward metaphysical symbols and signs. I shudder at your interest in that awful mess of a twaddle which Fort made into a book. I tremble at the Christian Science fugue in the end of *The "Genius"*. Your plays of the supernatural rather appal [sic] me.[120] I find you playing more and more with metaphysical terms and ideas—perhaps unconsciously—in much of your later work). (*Letters* I: 335)

Dreiser was offended by his friend's insinuations. Smith takes a rather transparent stab at Dreiser's humble background, referring to his "religious parentage," the author's father having been an almost fanatically devout Catholic. "Men do not leap out of such trends in a single generation," says Smith (336). Dreiser was no true believer, however. In his response to Smith, he frames his interest as a sort of academic one and suggests that the true value of religion is in soothing the aches of lesser minds:

> Religion is a bandage for sore brains. Morality, ditto. It is the same as a shell to a snail. The blistering glare of indefinable forces would destroy most, were it not for the protecting umbrella of illusion. That was what I meant when I said that Franklin Booth had been aided by Christian Science. He was looking for a blanket under which to crawl, and he found it. Eugene Witla was in the same position. I tried to show just how it was that he came to dabble with Christian Science, and why, in the long run it failed to hold him. Having recovered a part of his mental strength he shed it, as a snake does a skin. I have never been under any illusion in regard to religion, morality, metaphysical fiddle-faddle. I had my fill in my youth. Today I want facts but I am not to be denied the right to speculate in my own way and I have no fear that I shall be led into any religious or moralic

[120] A reference to *Plays of the Natural and Supernatural*, a series of "reading plays" composed while *The "Genius"* was in production.

> bog. I am much too sane for that. If you see signs, kindly let me know. (*Letters* I: 336-7)

This, he claims, is why he approved of Franklin's conversion to Christian Science and possibly why he recommended it to Mrs. Grant Allen and even sought it out himself in his weaker moments. Nevertheless, the defensive tone of this retort suggests that perhaps he protested a little too much.

For scholars, Dreiser's interest in Christian Science and the occult remains one of the most inscrutable and even embarrassing aspects of his legacy. Donald Pizer, who in his 1976 assessment, deemed *The "Genius"* both an aesthetic and ideological failure, says that, "The Christian Science section in *The "Genius"* is so muddy that many readers have been at a loss to discern Dreiser's attitude toward the faith and the role of the section in the novel" (Pizer 359 n36). Bill Brown briefly acknowledges it in his contribution to *The Cambridge Companion to Theodore Dreiser*: "Though Dreiser himself was genuinely interested in Christian Science (and in Quakerism), its passing role in the novel should be read as a measure of his inability to imagine a resolution to worldly problems within the confines of materialism" (Brown 96).[121] Only Louis Zanine recognizes the Christian Science section as more than an anomaly:

> The fact that Dreiser interrupts his novel for over three pages to present the reader with these seeming scientific documentations of the existence of creative force suggests that he was attempting to accomplish more than merely chart the winding path of Witla's philosophic quest. The tone of the novel slips in these pages from narrative to didactic, and Dreiser's description of Witla's conclusions drawn from these readings is a confession of his own conviction in a creative power. (Zanine 75)

---

[121] This lack of comprehension even in 2004 probably has to do with the fact that literary scholars have yet to benefit from the latest, best work being done on Christian Science by Gill, Schoepflin, and Gottschalk. The section on Christian Science in the 2005 edition of *The Cambridge History of American Literature* commits the familiar error of taking the statements of Eddy's critics (regarding the authorship of *Science and Health*, her avarice, and her mental stability) at face value and uncritically repeats theories that have long been called into question if not totally debunked.

Smith's rather patronizing letter implies that in indulging in this sort of metaphysical musing, the author was disrupting the image that his friends and colleagues would prefer he project. Dreiser's interest in Christian Science as well as the philosophical uncertainty he betrays in this novel, in addition to being somewhat radical, was unacceptably feminizing during the author's time. In addition to reflecting his well-known ambivalences toward predatory capitalism and materialistic consumer culture, a preoccupation in Christian Science—which was so frequently identified with a particular kind of credulous female—would have represented a dissent from hegemonic masculinity.

Similarly, the Christian Science section of this novel is difficult to account for precisely because it disrupts the narrative trajectory of the protagonist from a sentimental, neurotic artist to a successful businessman. And in the process it betrays considerable ambivalence about the physical, economic, and moral consequences of unbridled male desire. Yes, insofar as *Th*e "*Genius"* is a reflection on the writer's moral, psychological, and spiritual state at a particular point in his life, we can see the hero attempting to construct a masculine identity, but the presence of the Christian Science section suggests that his vision of this masculinity is far more fluid, far more heterogeneous than Mencken's review, or interpretations based on it, would have it.

DESIRE AND GENDER IDEOLOGY IN THE TURN OF THE CENTURY U.S.

The moral implications of desire were far-reaching in a period permeated by the biological determinism of evolutionary theory and Social Darwinism. Desire could be an economic force as well as a sexual one, a force that had the power to shape society for

good or ill in addition to shaping individual lives.[122] As Beryl Satter's monumental history of the New Thought movement—a dissenting offshoot of Christian Science—indicates, late nineteenth century white middle class U.S. Americans were engaged in a debate over whether the key to Anglo Saxon "race progress" was masculine desire or feminine spirituality, "whether manly 'desire' was the fuel of competition and hence progress, or whether it was the poisonous threat to civilization that must be contained by womanly altruism and spirituality" (26). On one side of the debate were "prominent white male theorists," who "drew upon medical, anthropological, and evolutionary discourses to demonstrate 'scientifically' the ironclad linkages between male desire, female domesticity, industrial capitalist society, and the development of the Anglo-Saxon race" (26). One such theorist was Herbert Spencer, a hero of Dreiser's, who asserted that it is "criminal" to "deprive men, in any way, of liberty to pursue the objects they desire, when it was appointed to insure them that liberty" (*Social* 137). On the other side were "white female activists" like Catherine Beecher and Charlotte Perkins Gilman, who "heralded themselves as the epitome of Anglo-Saxon racial development" and "claimed science as a womanly spiritual discourse, promoted cooperation over capitalism, and strategized toward the final eradication of devolutionary male desire" (Satter 27).

U.S. society vacillated between gendered ideals of unfettered desire and restraint throughout the nineteenth century as the dominant culture attempted to position itself in a rapidly changing and diversifying world by negotiating along the lines of race, class, and gender. This gave way to a variety of expressions of and prescriptions about gender. As Gail Bederman indicates, Progressive men idealized "chest-thumping virility, vigorous

[122] For more on the economic implications of desire as it applies to Dreiser, see Walter Benn Michaels's reading of *Sister Carrie*, in which "Carrie's economy of desire involves an unequivocal endorsement of what many of Dreiser's contemporaries, most of his successors, and finally Dreiser himself regarded as the greatest of all social and economic evils, the unrestrained capitalism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries" (35). Michaels

outdoor athleticism" while also exhibiting a "growing interest in erstwhile 'feminine' occupations like parenthood and domesticity" (7).[123] One theory of manhood, associated primarily with the ante-bellum period, held that men were supposed to "embody rationality, will power, and self-control" (Satter 27). This was consistent with the mid-nineteenth century understanding of human physiology as a "closed-energy" system that mandated "willed asceticism: like economic advancement or religious salvation, physical health was dependent upon mastering the body's wasteful impulses. Weakness, illness, madness, or even death would result if one allowed one's body to 'spend' its vital energies on debilitating sensual pleasures" (Satter 28). Manly restraint legitimized a man's authority "to protect and direct those weaker than himself: his wife, his children, or his employees" (Bederman 12). Men were instructed to conserve their life force by avoiding masturbation and other forms of sexual license. Similar theories about the limited nature of the body's resources influenced the diagnosis and treatment of neurasthenia or "nervous exhaustion." In *American Nervousness* (1881), physician George Miller Beard would define neurasthenia as a "deficiency or lack of nerve-force," characterized by a variety of symptoms from chronic exhaustion to dyspepsia to headaches and sexual dysfunction (vi). Beard theorized that individuals had a limited amount of nervous energy which tended to be too rapidly depleted by the forces of modern civilization and performance of "brain work." Because the primary purpose of the civilized man was to engage in rational pursuits, "Doctors warned men not to 'spend their seed' (i.e., the essence of their energy) recklessly, but to conserve themselves for the civilizing endeavors' they were embarked upon" (Ehrenreich *Complaints,* 27). This regulation, even suppression of desire, had economic as well as physical consequences,

[123] For Bederman, gender is "a historical, ideological process" that results in "many contradictory ideas" about gender and gendered expression (7).

prompting "young men to postpone marriage until they could support a family in proper middle-class style, to work hard and live abstemiously so that they could amass the capital to go into business for themselves" (Bederman 12).

This "conservation of energy" paradigm of medical perception held that women's physiological energies were dominated and thereby depleted by the reproductive system: "because reproduction was woman's grand purpose in life, doctors agreed that women ought to concentrate their physical energy internally, toward the womb. All other activity should be slowed down or stopped during the peak periods of sexual energy use" (Ehrenreich *Complaints,* 28). Women were discouraged from getting an education and performing the sort of "brain work" reserved for men. Silas Weir Mitchell's "rest cure," a regimen of complete abstinence from any mentally taxing activity was a paradigmatic treatment for female neurasthenics. Charlotte Perkins Gilman famously fictionalized her own disastrous experience with Mitchell's treatment in "The Yellow Wallpaper," in which isolation and lack of stimulation gradually drive the female protagonist insane.

Gender ideology and gendered conceptions of desire shifted in the post-Civil War era as "in a society of increasing economic complexity, white men found that hard work and self-discipline bore little relation to economic success" (Satter 33).[124] The shifting demographics of the city and the entrance of white middle class women into higher education and the professions also catalyzed the reconfiguration of white middle class male identity as aggressive and desiring rather than rational and restrained: "The anthropological scenario depicted male desire—for money, offspring, fame, or success—as the driving force behind progress and civilization" (Satter 35). The re-orientation of

[124] According to Bederman, "Middle-class manliness had been created in the context of a small-scale, competitive capitalism which had all but disappeared by 1910. Between 1870 and 1910, the proportion of middle class men who were self-employed dropped from 67 percent to 37 percent. At the same time, the rapid expansion of low-level clerical work in stores and offices meant that young men beginning their careers as clerks were unlikely to gain promotion to responsible, well-paid management positions, as their fathers had" (12).

middle class attitudes toward desire also shaped (and was shaped by) a reconfiguration of middle class life around leisure and consumption rather than labor and production (Bederman 13). Advertisers directed their efforts toward the creation of new desires rather than the fulfillment of conventional needs. The white middle class culture of restraint became a culture of entitlement, though that entitlement was mostly the purview of the white men whose sense of rightful authority and power had been challenged by women, immigrants, working class whites, and ethnic minorities. Evolutionary biologists and sociologists like Spencer were convinced that the channeling of male desire toward productive economic pursuits was essential, not only to individual prosperity, but to the progression of the Anglo-Saxon race, which was deemed by white Victorians as naturally superior to all others.

This valorization of male desire was accompanied by the reassignment of women to the domestic role of enabling but never emulating that desire and aggressiveness (Satter 35). Many female activists dissented from this last view even as they accepted the notion that men were naturally aggressive and desiring while women were innately passionless and nurturing. Many female activists expressed the opinion that the advancement of civilization depended not upon male desire and individualism but feminine cooperation and altruism (Satter 40). As Charlotte Perkins Gilman (then Stetson) argued in *Women and Economics* (1900), "Human progress lies in the perfecting of the social organization" (162). She goes on to describe the myriad ways in which the trappings of civilization—"the linking of humanity together across ocean and mountain and desert plain by steam and electricity, in the establishment of such world-functions as the international postal service"—fosters sympathy and cooperation among diverse peoples and nations (163). Women, due to their superior morality and role as guardians of relationship, were, according to this theory, uniquely designed to be the ambassadors of

middle class Anglo-Saxon virtue. This reconfiguration of Victorian gender ideology provided an argument for women's expanded participation in the public sphere.

These early white feminists found common cause with various progressive and social justice movements, and interestingly, many of these activists found their way to Christian Science and its offshoots. Woman movement leaders and social justice activists tended to view aggressive male desire as a social evil, responsible not only for such abominations as rape (including marital rape) and forced pregnancy,[125] but also the exploitation of the poor and the volatility of the market with its catastrophic boom and bust cycles. Male desire was linked not only to the sexual oppression of women but to the aggressive, predatory pursuit of individual wealth at all costs. The valorization of female desirelessness and cooperation was why

> [T]he Knights of Labor, the Farmers' Alliance, and Bellamyite Nationalists not only encouraged women's participation in their ranks, but also supported temperance, women's suffrage, and social purity. These alliances were possible because by the last quarter of the nineteenth century reformers of all sorts began to understand the social chaos around them in heavily gendered terms. The Knights of Labor, the Grange, the Alliance and Populist movements, the Single-Taxers, and the Bellamyite Nationalists all hoped to implement politically the ideals of cooperation rather than conflict, harmonious sharing rather than cutthroat competition, and rational planning rather than unimpeded personal greed. As some woman movement leaders saw it, these were the values of refined womanhood, not lustful manhood. (Satter 44)

These arguments about both gender and social organization also tended to be made with reference to shifting theories about the nature of the body and the mind. As gender ideology shifted toward the notions of male carnality versus female spirituality, women and the movements they led became more closely allied to theories that subordinated the

[125] The argument against forced pregnancy within marriage appropriated evolutionary rhetoric as well: "Men who impregnated their wives against their will or, even worse, who made sexual demands while their wives were pregnant produced offspring who were sickly and doomed to inherit the sensual passions of their fathers, they argued" (Satter 41).

material world to the spiritual or, in the case of Christian Science, did away with the material world altogether.

In 1887, Reverend George B. Day preached a sermon for the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Chicago, entitled "Sheep, Shepherd, and Shepherdess," that sums up Scientists' radical theories about gender:

> Our masculine teachers declare that the day of miracles is passed. They smile at the unreasonable belief that Christ can or will save from disease and death. By their own declarations they stand condemned; and there is more than a suspicion, already awakened, that we are witnessing the transfer of the Gospel from male to female trust.
>
> You do well to note the signs of the times,—of a movement,—significant and already well defined,—which has assumed proportions which must impress you. Women no longer give a silent assent to the theory that they are secondary and subordinate to men. Eighteen hundred years ago, Paul declared that man was the head of the woman; but now, in Science and Health, it is asserted that "woman is the highest form of man." (Day)

Stephen Alison and Alice Boyd of *The Christian Scientist* also provide us with examples of how early feminism, socialism, and Christian Science found common cause. Alison saw Christian Science as the missing piece that completed the socialist ideal and at one point reflected ruefully that his fellow travelers in Great Britain, where he was heavily involved in social justice movements, were not influenced by the U.S.-based Christian Science movement: "A better understanding of that form of teaching which Mary Baker Eddy has made familiar to many in 'Science and Health,' supplies an adequate solution [to the divisions between secular and Christian socialists], which, had it been known to Socialists and Secularists … would have given them both a common platform to stand on" (2.6: 2). Christian Science and New Thought critiqued capitalism by appealing to the fundamental unreality of material wealth. A letter attributed to "an early student of Mrs. Eddy" and published in *The Christian Scientist* advances the argument that: "[B]y handling money we handle every human belief of disease. We lust upon intellect, money,

friends, home, etc., and what is the result? Death. The moment we begin to see that money as money does not exist, but that it is the idea that supports, strengthens, cares for and sustains us in every way, we are beginning at the foundation" (1.1: 8). Alison would similarly state, "False theology, and cut-throat competition, causing ruthless rivalry among humans is a logical result of the belief in the material origin of man, that humans are children of men, instead of children of God, and the concomitant belief in the 'good old rule—the simple plan, That they should take who have the power, And they should keep who can'" (2.6: 2). Those who advanced Christian Science and social justice together saw hope in a society structured by Love, a concept that Eddy returns to over and over again in *Science and Health*, an empathy engendered by the recognition that material possessions are unreal and human minds are interdependent. Christian Scientists echoed the familiar arguments about women's role as ambassadors of this superior model of social organization. As Eddy claimed in *Retrospection and Introspection*, "woman must give it birth," speaking of Christian Science and the spiritual revolution that it was supposed to engender. While men participated widely in the movement, many Christian Scientists believed that men must learn womanly virtues in order to be spiritually uplifted. As that same student of Eddy's wrote in *The Christian Scientist*, "Man is to be redeemed through the woman thought, and that visibly expressed, else it is not Science" (1.1: 8).

Cooperation between Christian Scientists, woman movement leaders, and social justice advocates in a critique of aggressive desire as economic and sexual force was hardly universal. In fact, as Satter's history of Christian Science and New Thought demonstrates, the supremacy of mind over matter would be used by many to justify the pursuit of personal success, a line of thinking that would become very influential in twentieth century business culture. Furthermore, mental healing was, for Eddy and many

others, a successful business in and of itself. Twain, Sinclair, and *McClure's* would all attack Eddy for this very reason, even though they drastically overestimated her wealth when doing so. Nevertheless, it is clear that Christian Science also provided a religio-scientific vocabulary with which social justice advocates and woman movement leaders could critique oppressive economic, political, and domestic arrangements.

DREISER'S AMBIVALENCE TOWARD DESIRE

Theodore Dreiser's life spanned the period marked by these negotiations of gender ideology and attitudes about desire, and his relationship to his body and sexuality were mediated at various points by internalized cultural norms that either mandated restraint or celebrated the expression of male desire. Dreiser's ambivalence about sexuality mirrors his ambivalence about the capitalist project. As the author's biography reveals, as an adolescent, he was simultaneously sexually precocious and horrified by the immediacy of his own urges. Believing that his sexual thoughts were sinful, he confessed them to his priest, as he reports in *Dawn*:

> My thoughts were coming to be constantly on girls … and since I still deemed them wrong, I frequently confessed them to the Catholic priest. The latter, under the seal of the confessional, gravely warned me against them. … At the same time, as I have stated, I had this long time been finding decidedly heterodox references and counter-beliefs in almost all that I read. In such a mental state, and physically surrounded as I was, I was literally blazing physically" (265).

His "ridiculous and unsatisfactory practice of masturbation" also troubled him (*Dawn* 268). When he began noticing physical symptoms, he was convinced, as a youth, that it was causing irreparable harm: "Theodore decided he was having a nervous breakdown, which was nature's way of restoring his system to 'parity.' He had been overtaxing his body, or, as he put it nearly fifty years later, 'paying out of one treasury by drawing too

swiftly and heavily on others.' He retained the Victorian belief that emissions of semen represent a sort of overdraft on one's 'energy bank.' This was the prevailing opinion" (Lingemann 31).

Though he would write from the perspective of 1931 of the ridiculousness of these superstitions, such paranoid fantasies about the consequences of desire plagued his early sexual experiences and emerged in his novels. He has the narrator of *The "Genius"* attribute Eugene Witla's neurasthenic condition to overindulgence in the sexual act with his wife, Angela, the fictional surrogate for Jug: "He had no knowledge of the effect of one's sexual life upon one's work, nor what such a life when badly arranged can do to a perfect art" (246). This assertion echoes the theory of George Miller Beard that "indulgence of appetites and passions" was among the many causes of neurasthenia (*American Nervousness,* vi). Eugene is instructed to abstain from such relations but has difficulty obeying: "He was continuing his passional relations with Angela, in spite of a growing judgment that they were in some way harmful to him. But it was not easy to refrain, and each failure to do so made it harder" (*Genius*, 252). This section of the novel is apparently an accurate depiction of Dreiser's own sense that sexual overindulgence was to blame for his chronic ill health and depression following the publication of *Sister Carrie* (Lingemann 194).

Equally terrifying was the less fantastical possibility of disease or pregnancy as a result of sex. In *Dawn*, he speaks of his inaugural sexual experience with the wanton daughter of a local baker and the fear that perhaps she had given him "'The clap!' I remember that word as something menacing, something signifying a disease which one caught if one did not know with whom one was playing in this way" (249). He also observed the results of his sisters' sexual misadventures, two of them having become pregnant out of wedlock while Dreiser was a youth, bringing down his father's wrath and

inviting social ignominy upon his family. His early relationships as a struggling journalist in Chicago were tainted by the fear that an unwanted pregnancy would tie him down and destroy his prospects. Richard Lingemann suggests that such fears were behind the performance issues (in the form of premature ejaculation) that Dreiser reported in early drafts of *Newspaper Days*:

> It was a measure of how tightly the old bugaboos about masturbation gripped him that years later Dreiser though of his precipitousness as "impotence." In a passage later expurgated from *Newspaper Days*, he writes "though I ejaculated copiously, I still imagined I was impotent due to youthful errors and bordering on senility." Inexperience and an inordinate fear of making Lois pregnant—not only because a child would tie him down to her but because of his memories of his sisters' experiences—probably go far in explaining his unsatisfactory performance. He considered "potency" equivalent to ejaculating inside a woman, which created the risk of impregnation. Dreiser's anxiety served as a psychic coitus interruptus. It induced a compulsion to withhold that was overridden by his strong desire, with the result that he "spent" uncontrollably. *Had* the affair [with Lois] progressed, he would have felt obligated to "do right" by Lois even if they didn't have a child, and he didn't want to marry her. (Lingemann 56)

As his marriage to Jug eventually soured, Dreiser was similarly worried about the way in which pregnancy would imprison him and destroy the object of desire and affection that he had so idealized: "Jug begged him to let her have a child, thinking that fatherhood would steady him. But he adamantly refused, as he had throughout their marriage. … He told her that giving birth would ruin her figure, the implication being that she would become unattractive to him. And, obviously, he disliked the idea of having a child because it would strengthen her hold over him" (Lingemann 246). The choice to have Angela contrive to get pregnant against Eugene's will in *The "Genius"* is, perhaps, a reflection of Dreiser's fears about the way in which sexual relationships might tether him to a woman he no longer desired.

And indeed, the type of women that Dreiser desired was mediated by a Victorian cultural milieu that idealized female purity. Lingemann reports that "Dreiser's sexual nature was split: one part of him was drawn to women of experience who were openly sensual and took the lead in the affair ('made their way' with him). But another part sought an ideal, which meant fresh, young girls with petal-smooth faces and innocent eyes, like the nymph in the painting 'September Morn'" (59). The split nature of the author's desire is reflected in his accounts of Eugene Witla's early affairs. As a young artist trying to make his way in New York City, Witla dallies with sexually experienced, sophisticated women with artistic careers of their own, women like Christina Channing (a brilliant contralto) and Miriam Finch (an accomplished sculptor and intellectual). He entertains himself with these women even as Angela Blue, to whom he is engaged, pines away in her father's house for him. Eugene idealizes the pure, unsullied Angela and the example of clean Christian living that her family embodies: "They were written all over with Christian precept—not church dogma—but Christian precept, lightly and good naturedly applied. They obeyed the ten commandments in so far as possible and lived within the limits of what people considered sane and decent" (122). Once he deflowers his fiancé in her family's home, Eugene feels a profound sense of shame and loss, though he primarily feels guilty about betraying Jotham Blue, Angela's father, in his own home:

> Eugene felt that Jotham believed him to be an honest man. He knew he had that appearance. He was frank, genial, considerate, not willing to condemn anyone—but this sex question—that was where he was weak. And was not the whole world keyed to that? Did not the decencies and the sanities of life depend on right moral conduct? Was not the world dependent on how the homes were run? How could anyone be good if his mother and father had not been good before him? How would the children of the world expect to be anything if people rushed here and there holding illicit relations? Take his sister Myrtle now—would he have wanted her rifled in this manner? (181)

After their tryst, the novel takes a dark turn in which Angela threatens to drown herself if Eugene tries to back out of their engagement: "Angela had thrown herself on his mercy and his sense of honor to begin with. She had extracted a promise of marriage—not urgently, and as one who sought to entrap him, but with the explanation that otherwise life must end in disaster for her" (183). Yet Dreiser makes it clear that Eugene does feel trapped and later resents both the forced promise and the social conventions that made her demand it. Richard Lingemann, however, calls this reimagining of Dreiser and Jug's relationship "history soured by disillusionment. The truth was that Theodore's own desires trapped him, and his need for Sara was strong and more than just physical" (118). The big problem with desire, for Dreiser, was its consequences, though in his later work, he blamed socially enforced monogamy and moral conventions more than anything else for the direness of those consequences. *An American Tragedy* might be accurately read as an extended argument for sex education and accessibility to birth control as well as an indictment of the moral hypocrisy that made abortions available to the wealthy but not the poor. In the case of *The "Genius"*, it is Angela's conventionality—especially compared to the sexually liberated Christina Channing, who has no marriage aspirations—that forces Eugene into an untenable situation. It is also Angela's conventionality that causes her to thwart his affair with Suzanne Dale—the fictional surrogate for Thelma Cudlipp.

Dreiser was also concerned about the economic and social justice implications of desire. Naming the Cowperwood series *The Trilogy of Desire* is a reference both to Cowperwood's (who was inspired by financier Charles Yerkes) pursuit of beautiful women—in the form of Aileen Butler and Berenice Fleming—and his relentless pursuit of wealth. Cowperwood is a kind of Spencerian hero, one who accurately assesses the social order as a young man at the beginning of *The Financier*, seeing a lobster slowly

feeding on a squid in a tank on the street, and applies it to his business dealings. While Cowperwood is undoubtedly idealized for his individualism, Dreiser also depicts the dark side of this culture of economic predation: political scandal, catastrophic boom and bust cycles, forces that grind men into poverty even more readily than they elevate them to exalted prosperity.[126] According to Lingemann, Cowperwood "embodied a conflict within Dreiser. On the one hand he admired and envied the famous rogue builders of American capitalism, reflecting his own boyhood ambitions. … On the other, his acute sense of social justice condemned them as exploiters of the common people" (278).

Likewise, *The "Genius"* depicts just how readily society will throw away a formerly celebrated citizen. The first half of the novel traces Eugene's meteoric rise as an artist only to then depict his catastrophic fall as his neurasthenic condition prevents him from producing new paintings for a prolonged period. His sickness is written on his very body, causing the powerful people who once elevated his work to shun him, including M. Charles, the gallery manager who launched his career:

> Eugene's mental state, so depressed, so helpless, so fearsome—a rudderless boat in the dark, transmitted itself as an impression, a wireless message to all those who knew him or knew of him. His breakdown, which had first astonished M. Charles, depressed and then weakened the latter's interest in him. Like all other capable, successful men in the commercial world M. Charles was for strong men—men in the heyday of their success, the zenith of their ability. The least variation from this standard of force and interest was noticeable to him. If a man was going to fail—going to get sick and lose his interest in life or have his viewpoint affected, it might be very sad, but there was just one thing to do under such circumstances—get away from him. Failures of any kind were dangerous things to countenance. (298)

[126] Dreiser had himself experienced and witnessed these dramatic cycles, having sunk to the point of starvation and homelessness after the publication of *Sister Carrie*. He also watched his brother Paul, a famous song-writer, lose his fortune and social position, dying without even enough money for the funeral.

Once rejected by the artistic elites in Europe and New York City, Eugene is forced to walk from store to store attempting to sell his paintings for a fraction of what they would have brought at the peak of his fame. There is a seemingly inescapable chain of causality at work here. Eugene's overindulgence in sex leads to the depletion of his resources, which weakens him as a man and makes him a less viable commodity. In both a physical and economic sense, it unmans him and renders him abhorrent to the powerful men who prize vigor, who are looking, perhaps, for a desire that does not dissipate in the face of hardship. *The "Genius"* portrays capitalism as a thing that feeds on the desire and vitality of brilliant artistic minds, bleeds them dry, and then discards them.

In a very real way, desire, its brief flame so easily extinguished, is a reminder of human frailty and of the body's contingency. It is a sign of the temporality and futility of human pursuits. This is a problem that Eugene contemplates throughout the novel. At a key moment in Eugene and Angela's relationship, when the two nearly give in to their desires in the home of Angela's family (prior to the episode in which they actually do), Eugene reflects on the frailty of that desire and the body itself, thinking, "'What is the human body? What produces passion? Here we are for a few years surging with a fever of longing and then we burn out and die.' He thought of some lines he might write, of pictures he might paint. All the while, reproduced before his mind's eye like a cinematograph, were views of Angela as she had been tonight in his arms, on her knees" (127). The image of Angela on her knees is both a reminder of her physical and emotional vulnerability and the explosive potential of their physical attraction. "No harm had come," he reflects, foreshadowing the impending disaster of their marriage (127). A little bit later, reading "Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, Lubbock," he dwells morosely on the temporary nature of any human attraction or relationship:

> To think that his life should endure but for seventy years and then be no more was terrible. He and Angela were chance acquaintances—chemical affinities—never to meet again in all time. He and Christina, he and Ruby—he and anyone—a few bright hours were all they could have together, and then would come the great silence, dissolution, and he would never be anymore. (157)

Yet that impermanency makes him "all the more eager to live, to be loved while he was here" (157). It is in this state of mind that he finally persuades Angela to give in to him and then must later come to terms with the fact that in the fulfillment of that desire, something else may have been lost: "This deed shamed him. And he asked himself whether he was wrong to be ashamed or not. Perhaps he was just foolish. Was not life made for living, not worrying? He had not created his passions and desires" (181).

Eugene's inexhaustible attraction to youth and innocence means that he harbors a desire which is forever forced to seek new objects, as the very act of possessing what he wants depletes her value in his eyes, making the women in his life the very sort of limited and disposable commodity he and his art prove to be. The narrator announces this tendency as a weakness, a tragedy waiting to happen:

> The weakness of Eugene was that he was prone in each of these new conquests to see for the time being the sum and substance of bliss, to rise rapidly in the scale of uncontrollable, exaggerated affection, until he felt that here and nowhere else, now and in this particular form was ideal happiness. He had been in love with Stella, with Margaret, with Ruby, with Angela, with Christina, and now with Frieda, quite in this way, and it had taught him nothing as yet concerning love except that it was utterly delightful. He wondered at times how it was that the formation of a particular face could work this spell. There was plain magic in the curl of a lock of hair, the whiteness or roundness of a forehead, the shapeliness of a nose or ear, the arched redness of full-blown petal lips. The cheek, the chin, the eye—in combination with these things—how did they work this witchery? The tragedies to which he laid himself open by yielding to these spells—he never stopped to think of them. (285)

The body, in this configuration of will and desire is a kind of impenetrable mystery, a force wholly independent of human volition. The isolated components of the female body act almost as their own agents in this passage, just as Eugene's body responds to them before his mind can tease out the implications or contemplate the consequences of acting. Dreiser dissociates physical attraction from love, an emotion that he locates in some higher function of the mind. Love can be eternal, but attraction is not: "Hypnotic spells of this character like contagion and fever have their period of duration, their beginning, climax and end. It is written that love is deathless, but this was not written of the body nor does it concern the fevers of desire" (286). Dreiser asks whether human beings have any real agency over these forces:

> It is a question whether the human will, of itself alone, ever has cured or ever can cure any human weakness. Tendencies are subtle things. They are involved in the chemistry of one's being, and those who delve in the mysteries of biology frequently find that curious anomaly, a form of minute animal life born to be the prey of another form of animal life—chemically and physically attracted to its own disaster" (285).

Eugene's course toward inevitable disaster is only resolved by an adjustment of this chaotic configuration of body and mind, desire and will. The final third of *The "Genius"* proceeds as follows: Eugene recovers from neurasthenia and launches a career as a commercial artist, first in advertising and then in magazine publishing, embracing the world of commodity by becoming one of those creators of desire.[127] He and Angela remain childless, and for a time it seems that the protagonist has found a way of restraining his impulses. When Eugene reaches the pinnacle of his career and he and Angela become the toast of the New York social scene, his eye once again wanders, landing on the young, beautiful, and sophisticated Suzanne Dale. Richard Lingemann

[127] This episode is based on Dreiser's career at *The Delineator*, which ends following his unconsummated affair with Thelma Cudlipp.

characterizes Dreiser's affair with Thelma Cudlipp, as a sort of mid-life crisis, calling the author "acutely, even neurotically conscious of the passage of time" (246). Thelma/Suzanne is a desperate grasp for a taste of youth and beauty, a desire so profound that Theodore/Eugene sacrifices his career and social standing for it. The girl's mother, both in the novel and in real life, alerts Theodore/Eugene's employers about the affair, and Theodore/Eugene is fired. She also convinces the girl to wait a year before seeking some sort of formal arrangement with her paramour, enough time for her desire to cool.[128] In the novel, Eugene's willingness to trim and compromise, his failure to sweep her off her feet, all evidence that he was not "so powerful" as she had imagined, "so much a law unto himself," cause her to reconsider (671). Meanwhile, "the fullness of what [Eugene] had been doing began to dawn upon him dimly" (669). Angela succeeds in getting pregnant against Eugene's wishes, a ploy to get him to stay, and she dies in one of the most graphic scenes of traumatic childbirth ever to appear in American literature. It is in the midst of this crisis, a crisis that brings the contingency and consequences of desire, the frailty of the human body and the even greater weakness of the rational will into focus that Eugene is introduced to Christian Science.[129]

---

[128] Dreiser portrays Suzanne Dale as far more sexually sophisticated and unconventional than Thelma Cudlipp was in real life, possibly a moment of wishful thinking or projection. In actuality, Thelma became horrified by the intensity of Dreiser's need for her, having "blundered into a terrifying grown-ups' world with lurking monsters of convention and sexuality. … To make sure that Thelma did not elope with Dreiser on her own, as Thelma recounts in her unpublished memoir, her mother had a friend tell her all about sex and 'man's desire.' It was evidently a graphic lesson, laced with Victorian horrors, for it left Thelma disgusted and angry at Dreiser for wanting to subject her to such a nasty business" (251).

[129] In the 1911 version of the novel, which never came to print until the publication of Clare Eby's scholarly edition in 2008, Eugene and Suzanne ultimately reunite in a highly sentimental moment. In the official 1915 and 1923 versions, this separation is permanent.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE AS SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF DESIRE

In its myriad permutations as Christian Science, New Thought, and mind cure, the mind-body theories advanced by Mary Baker Eddy and Phineas Parkhurst Quimby presented two options for dealing with the problem of desire. The first, associated with Eddy and her closest followers, was simply to deny it true existence. If matter was not actually real, then desire was only an illusion that could be suppressed by the assertion of the power of Mind. Moreover, "[Eddy] equated the spiritual and the scientific, promoted salvific self-denial rather than aggressive self-assertion, and predicted the final triumph of spiritual 'Woman' over manly desire" (Satter 58). The second form, associated with Warren Felt Evans, embraced desire as a productive force and gradually evolved into "positive thinking." It is the first form of Christian Science that Eugene Witla encounters in the final chapters of *The "Genius."* When Myrtle, Eugene's sister, attempts to use "her knowledge of science to effect a rehabilitation for her brother" at Angela's request, the problem she directly addresses is his waywardness.[130] While Eugene resists the pathologization of his desire, both he and the authorial voice of the novel entertain the possibility that he might find "relief" from it through the study of Eddy's works. At a Christian Science service he hears the testimony of a man who seems to be very much like himself. Like Eugene, this man threw off the religious principles of his father and led a life of dissipation. He gambled and drank, but "my great weakness was women. … I pursued women as I would any other lure. They were really all that I desired—their bodies. My lust was terrible. It was such a dominant thought with me that I could not look at any good-looking woman except, as the Bible says, to lust after her" (691). The man describes the outcome of his philandering by saying only "I became diseased,"

[130] Though his problem does later manifest physically as "a new pain in his groin, which had come to him first when her mother first carried Suzanne off to Canada and he was afraid that he should never see her any more. It was a real pain, sharp, physical, like the cut of a knife. He wondered how it was that it could be physical and down there. His eyes hurt him and his finger tips. Wasn't that queer, too?" (687).

possibly a reference to venereal disease. He saw many doctors who were unable to heal him completely and was ultimately "carried into the First Church of Christ Scientist in Chicago," where he became "a well man—not well physically only, but well mentally, and, what is better yet, in so far as I can see the truth, spiritually" (692). Eugene is impressed with this man, not only because of his story, but because of his appearance: "He was no beggar or tramp, but a man of some profession—an engineer, very likely" (692). It is a sense of kinship with this man—"He personally never was diseased, but how often he had looked after a perfectly charming woman to lust after her!"—that precipitates his first serious reading of *Science and Health* (692). The fact that Eugene seems to pinpoint his promiscuity as the disease to be cured makes it clear that he considers Christian Science as a means of "curing" his desire.

Eugene reads *Science and Health* and considers its claims about the unreality of matter alongside similar claims by Carlyle, Marcus Aurelius, and Kant as well as the writings of contemporary physicist Edgar Lucien Larkin, who argues that " this micro-universe is rooted and grounded in a mental base" (697). This begins a long philosophical section in which the protagonist finally reaches "a pretty fair confirmation of Mrs. Eddy's contention that all was mind and its infinite variety and that the only difference between her and the British scientific naturalists was that they contended for an ordered hierarchy … whereas, she contended for a governing spirit" (699). Ultimately, he comes to see Christian Science as a possible solution to multiple problems pertaining to his marriage, his affair with Suzanne, and his depression. He takes heart in the fact that "Christian Science set aside marriage entirely as a human illusion," alluding to the belief that Mind rendered human reproduction and consequently sex and marriage obsolete (701). He visits a practitioner and wonders if her methods will "make him not want Suzanne ever any more? Perhaps that was evil? Yes, no doubt it was. Still. … Divinity could aid him if

it would. Certainly it could. No doubt of it" (708). Upon returning home, his eyes fall upon the following passage from *Science and Health*: "Carnal beliefs defraud us. They make man an involuntary hypocrite—producing evil when he would create good, forming deformity when he would outline grace and beauty, injuring those whom he would bless. He becomes a general mis-creator, who believes he is a semi-God. His touch turns hope to dust, the dust we have all trod" (709). Eugene, applying these allusions to carnality, creation, and the distortion of beauty to his own situation, once again wonders if Divine Principle might conquer his desire for Suzanne, thought he is unsure whether he actually wants this outcome.

After this period of reflection, Angela's moment of crisis arrives. Already weakened by a nervous breakdown brought on by the Suzanne affair, Angela is not expected to survive the delivery of the child she conceived in order to make Eugene stay. The wrenching depiction of traumatic surgical childbirth that follows serves as another reminder of the physical consequences of sex and of the catastrophic implications of both Eugene's wandering eye and Angela's futile attempts to keep him. Seeing her torment, Eugene is struck by "the subtlety and terror of this great scheme of reproduction, which took all women to the door of the grave, in order that this mortal scheme of things might be continued. He began to think that there might be something in the assertion of the Christian Science leaders that it was a lie and an illusion, a terrible fitful fever outside the rational consciousness of God" (712). As Beryl Satter reveals, many women did, in fact, embrace the anti-desire aspects of Christian Science as a way of escaping the biological horrors of compulsory heterosexuality: unwanted sexual relations and pregnancy, a condition that was frequently life threatening.[131]

[131] For another perspective on the health reform movement and the ideology of female passionlessness as a method of self-defense, see Chapter Two of Morantz-Sanchez, *Sympathy and Science.*

Christian Science does not liberate or cure Angela, however, though it is worth noting that her doctors are also unable to save her. In the end, Dreiser brings his hero to a philosophical place that is neither wholly in line with Christian Science nor wholly in line with scientific materialism. The latter, in fact, seems to be as horrifying in its practical implications as Christian Science is improbable. Eugene watches the doctors perform a Caesarean section, a procedure that is described in excruciating detail. What most horrifies Eugene is the utter absence of dignity or humanity. Angela, as the patient, becomes a non-person, the doctors mere mechanics: "They were working like carpenters, cabinet workers, electricians. Angela might have been a clay figure for all they seemed to care" (720). Even the child "might have been a skinned rabbit" (720). Yet it is this confrontation with mortality as well as the realization that humans are, in a very real way, helpless to overcome its inevitability no matter what theory of mind and body they embrace, that brings Eugene to a place of peace. He reconciles with Angela in the moments before her death and embraces sentimental fatherhood, raising his daughter alone. He continues to visit Mrs. Johns, the Christian Science practitioner, even though he can never wholeheartedly believe. In the end, he becomes something of a religious and philosophical eclectic, "an artist who, pagan to the core, enjoyed reading the Bible for its artistry of expression, and Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Spinoza and James for the mystery of things which they suggested" (734).

This may be very like what Dreiser hoped for himself. As his later novels, particularly *The Bulwark* demonstrate, the author retained an interest in religion and metaphysics. His biography even indicates that he and his partner Helen Richardson (the two of them cohabited for more than a decade before Jug granted Dreiser a divorce) attended a Christian Science church in California in the final years of his life (Lingemann 546). Christian Science never cured him of his sexual varietism, though it (accompanied

by the wisdom of experience) may have helped him make peace with it. As the authorial voice of the novel declares, "the need for religion is impermanent, like all else in life," including desire (734).

NEGOTIATING GENDER

But what might it have meant for Dreiser to occupy this liminal space between belief and doubt, granting some of the claims of Christian Science in spite of his lingering skepticism? Moreover, what might it have meant for Dreiser to have maintained a sympathy with a woman-centered philosophy that promoted many of the anti-sex pruderies he so despised? As Jennifer Fleissner reminds us, naturalism is thought to be the most unassailably masculine of the literary genres, framed by Frank Norris "as something of a bull in a china shop, upsetting the literary tea table" (14). Naturalism's rough frankness was a challenge to the genteel politeness of Howells and "women writers like Sarah Orne Jewett, whose work has often been said to make much of the teacup motif" (Fleissner 14). The publication of *The "Genius"* in 1915 and its republication in 1923 were landmarks in the history of censorship in the United States, key moments in a cultural debate about how sex and desire could be represented in mainstream literature. For many of Dreiser's supporters, his eventual recognition as a major American author was a victory for modern artistic sensibilities over Victorian prudery. Yet this battle was also habitually framed in terms of a battle of the sexes, between "liberated" desiring males and repressed, passionless women like Angela Blue. These debates were as much or more about constructing new dominant models of masculinity as the public role of women began expanding as they were about debates over artistic freedom vs. arcane religious morals. As Christina Simmons argues, "The myth of Victorian repression rehabilitated male sexuality and cast women as villains if they refused to respond to,

nurture, or support it. And by identifying women with Victorianism and men with a progressive and realistic understanding of sex, it confirmed men's sexual dominance as normative in modern marriage" (158). The promotion of female desirelessness by woman movement leaders and Christian Science and New Though practitioners continued to frame this gender opposition in an antagonistic way. However, as sexual reformists began rehabilitating male desire in the early twentieth century,

> [S]everal recurrent female images warned readers of both sexes of the threat controlling, neglectful or exploitive women posed to marriage. The stereotypes of the prudish Victorian matriarch, the demanding and burdensome wife, and the emotionally distant career woman represented caricatures of women who wielded excessive power and were not responsive to men's needs. (Simmons 164)

The trope of the sexually repressed Victorian woman, therefore, became one of the tools of the backlash against increasingly powerful and assertive women.

We see such tropes deployed throughout Dreiser's novel, as Angela's insistence on preserving her marriage to Eugene—presumably her only means of social and economic survival—is portrayed as a gross injustice inflicted upon the protagonist. There is an ugliness to both Dreiser and his hero's deployment of aggrieved male entitlement in the face of his wife's anguish as he demands that she free him to pursue affairs at his discretion, an ugliness that makes Angela's unhappy end all the more disturbing and the earlier images of her on her knees begging him not to take advantage of her during their courtship more violent and problematic. It is difficult to determine whether the death in childbirth represents an effort to empathize with Angela/Jug, a kind of revenge fantasy, or some combination of the two. Jug, of course, never contrived a pregnancy and remained alive and well when *The "Genius"* first appeared in print. The darkest reading of this section is that Dreiser punished his wife in print (and apparently did so in reality as well) for essentially being a product of her times, for getting older, and for becoming

less attractive to him.[132] While Dreiser is capable of critiquing compulsory heterosexual marriage and the social and legal structures that bind poorly matched people together long past the point of misery, he did not seem to be aware at the time of the structural inequalities between men and women that exacerbated those conditions. But Christian Science also continued to assign essential, oppositional qualities to men and women, locating those qualities in spiritual reality (in contrast to biological reality). The problem of desire becomes a tragedy in this novel because it never transcends the gender binaries that make it a problem in the first place.

However, as I have argued, Dreiser's attitude toward desire, particularly during the period during which *The "Genius"* was conceived and written was one of ambivalence, vacillating between the nineteenth century model of masculine restraint and the twentieth century model of aggressive desire and sexual entitlement. Gail Bederman's point is worth repeating here: gender ideology in the Victorian/Progressive eras was hardly monolithic, and in Dreiser and his protagonist we see different gender norms competing for space within the same individual consciousness. In *The "Genius"*, we can observe a rejection of feminine control at work in the form of rank misogyny while also noting the ways in which the hero transgresses the boundaries of gender normativity. Even though he ultimately rejects the female-identified Christian Science, represented in this novel by Myrtle, Eugene's sister, and Mrs. Johns, the practitioner, the fact that Dreiser/Eugene engages with Eddy's ideas on such a profound level, to the point of placing her alongside the great British male naturalists is a moment where both author and protagonist break character, so to speak. After all, right-thinking men were not

[132] While Dreiser portrays and even idealizes sexually assertive women like Christina Channing in his novels, those women usually also perform non-threatening femininity. As Simmons indicates, this was of a piece with the twentieth century reconfiguration of gender roles which sought to accommodate women's increasing assertiveness in sexual relationships while maintaining male dominance. The flapper of the 1920's, for example, "embodied the popular notion of the free woman and retained a softness that did not threaten men" (167).

supposed to give Eddy a moment of serious attention. Associating Christian Science with women was a strategy that helped critics dismiss both Christian Science *and* women. However, as Jean McDonald so aptly observes,

> [T]his organization reputedly made up of enterprising American "kitchen hands" in fact included a considerable body of *men* … a point that has been largely ignored both by nineteenth-century male commentators and by a surprising number of later academic writers. Could this be because, perceived through the lens of prevailing male stereotypes, a woman-led movement could not possibly be taken seriously by men? If so, those men who appeared to be taking it seriously could be written off as not "real" men. (103)

Likewise, these critics tended to associate Christian Science with the simpletons "of the ignorant servant class, in ragged clothes, or school-marms and formidable battleaxes, hair tightly pinned, determined backs stiffened, hands archly poised, sharp noses supporting the inevitable spectacles, hard jaws, and lips either pursed dogmatically, or ferociously grinning at their woebegone dupes," ignoring the fact that well-heeled intellectuals were flocking to the movement in hordes (103-4). Upton Sinclair's screed in *The Profits of Religion* performs precisely this sort of move, declaring his allegiance to the "scientific" theories of mind and body while dismissing the feminine flightiness of Christian Science's metaphysics and pitying the poor rubes who paid to hear or read it. This policing of class and gender, I suggest, is one possible reason why Dreiser's colleagues expressed their concern about this section of the novel in such condescending terms and why Dreiser responded with such force, framing his interest in religion in general and Christian Science in particular as academic and therefore manly.

CONCLUSION

Christian Science, whatever else it might have been, was a strategy for dealing with human frailty and mortality. And for Dreiser, it appears that it never was more than

that—"a bandage that man invented to protect a soul made bloody by circumstance" and a bandage that must eventually come off (734). What we can learn from the Christian Science section of *The "Genius"* is just how deeply he was willing to probe those possibilities and how those preoccupations put him in direct conversation with larger nineteenth and early twentieth-century concerns about body and mind, desire and rational will, concerns that spanned religious and scientific discourses. It unveils the complexities of Dreiser's negotiations with his body, sexuality, and masculinity. Though it is abundantly clear from his biography that Dreiser never fully embraced the model of restraint or passionlessness promoted by Christian Scientists and social purity advocates, *The "Genius"* suggests that he shared their concerns about desire as both a personal and social problem.

This section of this little examined novel does, in fact, tell us something important about the author and about U.S. American culture, but it also, I contend, presents an opportunity to reflect on the way Dreiser's legacy has been shaped. The Dreiser of a certain critical imagination is a Dreiser who flouted convention, who pushed back Victorian prudery, who championed naturalistic, scientific thinking, and shunned moralistic sentimentality. This moment in *The "Genius"* does, in a very real way, challenge that perception. It presents us with a Dreiser who was profoundly insecure about his philosophical and religious orientation and about his own manliness, a Dreiser who was attempting to navigate that uncertain territory in print without arriving at any firm conclusions, leaving us instead with a hero who both embraces and restrains his desire, who can intellectually accommodate both Eddy and Spencer. At least, that uncertainty appears to be at the center of Donald Pizer's 1976 critique of the novel:

> In short, Eugene reaches the basic Dreiserian position that the world is governed by a process of mechanistic change which is both terrifying and beautiful. This philosophy should have armed Eugene for the battle of life

> by supplying him with an operative contempt for the confining institutions of society and complementary faith in his instinctive longing for beauty in the form of women and art. But the same speculative, introspective, and emotional temperament which encouraged Eugene to reach this amoral aestheticism prevents him from putting it into practice. … Dreiser's portrait of himself as Eugene is thus strongly self-critical. He characterizes himself as a man whose philosophy and whose love of beauty should firmly guide his life but who is nevertheless frequently led and defeated by such irrelevant forces as conscience, pity, introspection, and indecision. (146-7)

Eugene, in Pizer's estimation is a defective hero who must inevitably give way to Frank Cowperwood, who as a manly hero presented "a means of fulfilling in fiction, as [Dreiser] had not in life, that part of his nature which viewed strength and shrewdness as the only means by which beauty could be won in the face of a restrictive social morality" (151). *The "Genius"* presents us with a Dreiser who is feminized by his uncertainty, by his misgivings about wholeheartedly indulging in the objectified beauty of women—here placed by the critic alongside art objects—by his "introspective" and "emotional temperament" and his vulnerability to such female identified traits as "conscience, pity, introspection and indecision." Yet the author of *The "Genius"* is, I argue, an author as worthy of critical engagement as the author of *The Financier*, and an understanding of where the two meet, how they negotiate the lines of gender and authority, helps us understand Dreiser's opus better, and comprehending the significance of Christian Science is essential to that understanding.

Bibliography

Adams, E.H. Letter to S.S. MClure. 12 January 1907. Georgine Milmine Collection. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

"Additional Canards." *New Hampshire Patriot*. December 1906? *McClure's* File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Ahearn, Amy. "Engaging with the Political: Willa Cather, *McClure's Magazine,* and the Production of National Rhetoric. Diss. U of Nebraska, 2008. Print.

Alison, Stephen. "Metaphysics, Socialism, and Religion: A Second Open Letter to Upton Sinclair." *Google Books*. Web. 25 April 2010.

---."Christian Science Versus Organization: An Open Letter to Upton Sinclair." *The Christian Scientist.* 3.1 (September 1918): 1-3. *Google Books*. Web. 25 April 2010.

---. "Christian Socialism." *The Christian Scientist.* 2.6 (February 1918): 1-3. *Google Books*. Web. 25 April 2010.

Anonymous. Letter to the Editors. 1907? Georgine Milmine Collection. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Armstrong, Richard. Letter to the Editor. 8 November 1906. Georgine Milmine Collection. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

"A Victim of Christian Science." *The Medical Herald.* 17 (December 1898): 508. *Google Books.* Web. 22 January 2011.

"A Well Known Ghost." *The Month at Goodspeed's Bookshop.* 4.8 (n.d.): 231-2. Georgine Milmine Collection. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Baetzhold, Howard G. and Joseph B. McCullough. *The Bible According to Mark Twain.* New York: Touchstone, 1995. Print.

Bauman, Zygmunt. *Mortality, Immortality, and Other Life Strategies.* Stanford: Stanford UP, 1993. Print.

Beard, George M. *A Practical Treatise on Nervous Exhaustion.* New York: E.B. Treat, 1894. *Google Books.* Web. 9 September 2010.

---. *Sexual Neurasthenia: Its Hygiene, Causes, Symptoms and Treatment.* New York: E.B. Treat, 1884. *Google Books.* Web. 20 April 2010.

---. *American Nervousness: Its Causes and Consequences.* New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1881. *Google Books.* Web. 15 September 2010.

Bederman, Gail. *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995. Print.

Bednarowski, Mary Farrell. "Outside the Mainstream: Women's Religion and Women Religious Leaders in Nineteenth-Century America." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion.* 48.2 (Summer 1980): 207-31. Print.

Bell, Michael Davitt. *The Problem of American Realism: Studies in the Cultural History of a Literary Idea.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1993. Print.

Bennett, Bridget. *The Damnation of Harold Frederic: His Lives and Works.* New York: Syracuse UP, 1997. Print.

"Bills Affecting Christian Science." *Boston Globe.* (February 18, 1907): 32. Clipping. Alfred Farlow Scrapbooks. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston

"Biographical Sketch of Georgine Milmine." TS. *McClure's* File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Bledstein, Burton. *The Culture of Professionalism: the Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America.* New York: Norton, 1976. Print.

Bohlke, Brent. "Willa Cather and The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy." *American Literature.* 54.2 (May 1982): 288-94. Print. *JSTOR*. Web. 16 June 2009.

Bowlby, Rachel. *Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing and Zola.* New York: Routledge, 2009. Print.

Bremen, Brian. *William Carlos Williams and the Diagnostics of Culture.* New York: Oxford UP, 1993. Print.

Brennan, Stephen C. "Literary Naturalism as Humanism: Donald Pizer on Definitions of Naturalism." *Studies in American Naturalism.* 5.1 (Summer 2010): 8-20. *Project Muse.* Web. 5 April 2011.

Brooks, Joanna. "From Edwards to Baldwin: Heterodoxy, Discontinuity, and New Narratives of American Religious-Literary History. *American Literary History.* 22.2 (Summer 2010): 439-53. Print. *Project Muse* Web. 16 September 2010.

Brown, Bill. "The Matter of Dreiser's Modernity." *The Cambridge Companion to Theodore Dreiser*. Leonard Cassuto and Clare Eby, eds. New York: Cambridge UP, 2004. Print.

Brown, Clara Bell. Letter to the Editor. 8 December 1906. Georgine Milmine Collection. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Bush, Harold. *Mark Twain and the Spiritual Crisis of His Age.* Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2007. Print.

Cabot, Richard C. "100 Christian Science Cures." *McClure's*. 31.3 (July 1908): 472-6. Print.

---. "Mind Cure: Its Service to the Community." 1907. Non-Christian Science Publishing File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Case, Henry L. Letter to Frederick Peabody. 5 April 1903. Mark Twain Project, Berkeley.

Cather, Willa. Letter to Edwin Anderson. 24 November, 1922. Letter 0649 of *A Calendar of Letters of Willa Cather: An Expanded, Digital Edition*. Ed. Andrew Jewell and Janis P. Stout. *The Willa Cather Archive*. Ed. Andrew Jewell. U of Nebraska-Lincoln. 13 Dec. 2008 <http://cather.unl.edu>. Path: Letters; Keyword; 0649.

Cather, Willa and Georgine Milmine. *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy and the History of Christian Science.* David Stouck, ed. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1993. Print.

"The Christian Scientists." *The New York Times.* 13 November 1898: 12. *ProQuest Historical Newspapers.* Web. 20 January 2011.

Charon, Rita. *Narrative Medicine: Honoring the Stories of Illness.* New York: Oxford UP, 2006. Print.

Charon, Rita and Martha Montello, Ed. *Stories Matter: The Role of Narrative in Medical Ethics.* New York: Routledge, 2002. Print.

"Christian Science and Death." *The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.* 139.17 (27 October 1898): 428-9. *Google Books.* Web. 22 January 2011.

"Christian Science and the Law." *The Public: A Journal of Democracy.*1.35 (3 December 1898): 7-8. *Google Books.* Web. 22 January 2011.

"The Christian Scientist Fraud." *The Medical and Surgical "Review of Reviews."* 1.2 (November 1898): 86. *Google Books.* Web. 22 January 2011.

Clemens, Samuel L. Letter to Mrs. F. Duncan Jones. 27 May 1907. Mark Twain File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. Letter to Frederick Peabody. 4 April 1903. Mark Twain Project, Berkeley.

---. Letter to Joe Twichell. 4 April 1903. Mark Twain File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. Letter to Frederick Peabody. 14 January 1903. Mark Twain Project, Berkeley.

---. Letter to Frederick Peabody. 10 January 1903. Mark Twain Project, Berkeley.

---. Letter to William McCrackan. 17 December 1902. Mark Twain File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. Letter to Frederick Peabody. 15 December 1902. Mark Twain Project, Berkeley.

---. Letter to William McCrackan. 15 December 1902. Mark Twain File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. Letter to Mr. Spalding. 15 December 1902. Mark Twain File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. Letter to Frederick Peabody. 11 December 1902. Mark Twain Project, Berkeley.

---. Letter to Frederick Peabody. 11 December 1902. Mark Twain Project, Berkeley.

---. Letter to David A. Munro. 6 December 1902. Mark Twain File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. Letter to Frederick Peabody. 5 December 1902. Mark Twain Project, Berkeley.

---. Letter to William McCrackan. 5 December 1902. Mark Twain File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. Letter to Dr. Hale. 1 November 1899. Mark Twain File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Coe, A.S. "Modern Medical Science." *New York Medical Journal*. October 1889: 406-408. *Google Books.* Web. 22 January 2011.

Cooper, Lydia R. "Human Voices: Language and Conscience in Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court." Canadian Review of American Studies.* 39.1 (2009): 65-84. *Project Muse.* Web. 16 February 2010.

"Court Transcript: Woodbury v. Eddy." 1899. TS. Georgine Milmine Collection. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Cummings, Sherwood. *Mark Twain and Science: Adventures of the Mind.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1988. Print.

Cushman, Philip. *Constructing the Self, Constructing America: A Cultural History of Psychotherapy.* Boston: Addison-Wesley, 1995. Print.

DasGupta, Sayantani. "Being John Doe Malkovich: Truth, Imagination, and Story in Medicine." *Literature and Medicine* 25.2 (2006), 448. *JSTOR*. Web. 1 April 2012.

Day, George B. "Sheep, Shepherd, and Shepherdess." August 1887. TS. Georgine Milmine Collection, Boston.

"Death of Frederic." *The New York Times.* 23 October 1898: 19. *ProQuest Historical Newspapers.* Web. 20 January 2011.

"Declares Christian Science All a Fraud." *Sioux City Daily Tribune.* 1899. Alfred Farlow Scrapbooks. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Dillon, J. "Medical Organization." *The Journal of the Kansas Medical Society.* 6.8 (August 1906): 311-16. *Google Books.* Web. 22 January 2011.

Dittemore, John V. Letter to S.S. McClure. 14 November 1908. TS. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. Letter to S.S. McClure. 4 November 1908. TS. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. Letter to Edward Kimball. 31 October 1908. TS. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Dixon, Thomas, Geoffrey Cantor, and Stephen Pumfrey, eds. *Science and Religion: New Historical Perspectives.* New York: Cambridge UP, 2010. Print.

Dore, Florence. *The Novel and the Obscene: Sexual Subjects in American Modernism.* Stanford: Stanford UP, 2005. Print.

Downs, Catherine M. *Becoming Modern: Willa Cather's Journalism.* Selinsgrove: Susquehanna UP, 1999. Print.

Dreiser, Theodore. *The Genius.* Clare Virginia Eby, ed. Chicago: U of Illinois P, 2008. Print.

---. Renate von Bardeleben, ed. *A Traveler at Forty.* Champaign: U of Illinois P, 2004. Print.

---. *Jennie Gerhardt.* Ed. James L.W. West. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1992. Print.

---. *Selected Magazine Articles of Theodore Dreiser: Life and Art in the American 1890's.* Ed. Yoshinobu Hakutani. Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1985. Print.

---. *Letters of Theodore Dreiser: A Selection.* Vol. 1. Ed. Robert H. Elias. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1959. Print.

---. *The "Genius."* New York: Garden City Publishing, 1923. Print.

---. *A Hoosier Holiday.* New York: John Lane Co., 1916. Print.

Eddy, Mary Baker. "Retrospection and Introspection." Boston: Allison V. Stewart, 1912. Print.

---. *Science and Health with Key to Scriptures.* Boston: Church of Christ, Scientist, 1910. Print.

---. *Advice to Healers: Selected Letters by Mary Baker Eddy.* Vols. 1-3. 1870-1910. The Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. Letter to Archibald McLellan. 18 September 1902. TS. Milmine Collection. The Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. "The Science of Man." 1872. TS. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

"Editorials." *The Independent.* 50.2605 (3 November 1898): 1285. *Google Books*. Web. 20 January 2011.

Ehrenreich, Barbara. *Bright-Sided: How Positive Thinking is Undermining America.* New York: Picador, 2010. Print.

Ehrenreich, Barbara and Deirdre English. *For Her Own Good: Two Centuries of the Experts' Advice to Women.* New York: Anchor, 1978. Print.

---. *Witches, Midwives, and Nurses: A History of Women Healers.* New York: The Feminist Press, 1973. Print.

---. *Complaints and Disorders: The Sexual Politics of Sickness.* New York: The Feminist Press, 1973. Print.

Ender, Evelyn. *Sexing the Mind: Nineteenth-Century Fictions of Hysteria.* Ithaca: Cornell, 1995. Print.

"Faith Cure Murders." *The New York Times.* 11 November 1898: 6. *ProQuest Historical Newspapers*. Web. 20 January 2011.

Farlow, Afred. "A Glance at the Personnel of the Christian Science Movement." *Human Life.* 4.4 (January 1907): 5. Print. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. Letter to Christian Science Board of Directors. December 1905? TS. *McClure's* File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. Letter to Christian Science Board of Directors. 19 October 1905. TS. *McClure's* File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Faust, Drew Gilpin. *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008. Print.

Fine, Richard. "American Authorship and the Ghost of Moral Rights." *Book History*. 13. (2010): 218-50. Print.

"The First Christian Science Church Gives World Reporter Degree." *New York World*. (June 1899). Clipping. Alfred Farlow Scrapbooks. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Fleissner, Jennifer. *Women, Compulsion, Modernity: The Moment of American Naturalism.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2004. Print.

Michel, Foucault. *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception.* New York: Vintage, 1994. Print.

---. "What is an Author?" *Textual Strategies.* Ed. Josué V. Harari. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1979. Print.

Franchot, Jenny. "Religion and American Literary Studies." *American Literature.* 67.4 (December 1995): 833-42. *JSTOR*. Web. 16 September 2010.

Frank, Arthur. *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness, and Ethics.* Chicago: U of Chicago P. 1995. Print.

Fulton, Joe B. *Mark Twain's Ethical Realism: The Aesthetics of Race, Class, and Gender.* Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1997. Print.

Garden, Rebecca. "Telling Stories About Illness and Disability," *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine.* 53.1 (2010): 123. *Project Muse.* Web. 1 April 2012.

Gill, Gillian. *Mary Baker Eddy.* Reading: Perseus, 1998. Print.

Gleason, Timothy. *The Watchdog Concept: The Press and the Courts in Nineteenth Century America.* Ames: Iowa State UP, 1990. Print

Gottschalk, Stephen. *Rolling Away the Stone: Mary Baker Eddy's Challenge to Materialism*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2006. Print.

---. *The Emergence of Christian Science in American Religious Life.* Berkeley: U of California P, 1978. Print.

Griffin, Susan M. "Threshing Floors: A Response to Joanna Brooks." *American Literary History*. 22.2 (Summer 2010): 454-58. *Project Muse*. Web. 16 September 2010.

Haber, Samuel. *The Quest for Authority and Honor in the American Professions: 1750-1900.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1991. Print.

Hansen, Penny. "Women's Hour: The Feminist Implications of Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science Movement, 1885-1910." Diss. U of California Irvine, 1981.

"Harold Frederic and the Christian Scientists." *The Outlook.* 60.12 (November 1898): 710. *Google Books.* Web. 22 January 2011.

Harrington, Anne. *The Cure Within: A History of Mind-Body Medicine.* New York: Norton, 2008. Print.

Hatch, Nathan O. *The Democratization of American Christianity*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1989. Print.

"Harold Frederic and Christian Science." *The Buffalo Medical Journal.* 38.5 (December 1898): 377-8. *Google Books.* Web. 22 January 2011.

"The Harold Frederic Case." *The Christian Science Journal.* 26.9 (December 1898): 622-5. *Google Books.* Web. 22 January 2011.

H.G.W. "Church Healing." *Long Island Medical Journal.* :490-1. *Google Books.* Web. 22 January 2011.

Hill, Hamlin. *Mark Twain: God's Fool.* New York: Harper & Row, 1973. Print.

Hollaman, Jennie. Letter to Mary Baker Eddy. 24 May 1904. MS. Incoming Correspondence File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Hoover, Sharon. Ed. *Willa Cather Remembered.* Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2002. Print.

Huenneke, Judy. "Willa Cather Goes to Boston, or Who Wrote Milmine? 1993. TS. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity.

Hutchison, William R. *Religious Pluralism in America: The Contentious History of a Founding Ideal.* New Haven: Yale UP, 2004.

---. *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestanism.* Durham: Duke UP, 1992.

James, William. *Varieties of Religious Experience.* New York: Penguin, 1982. Print.

Jenkins, Philip. *Mystics and Messiahs: Cults and New Religions in American History.* New York: Oxford UP, 2001. Print.

Jensen, Casper Bruun and Kjetil Rodje. *Deleuzian Intersections: Science, Technology, Anthropology.* New York: Berghan Books, 2010. Print.

Johnson, James Peter. Letter to Mary Baker Eddy. 27 June 1905. MS. Incoming Correspondance File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. Letter to Mary Baker Eddy. 28 April 1905. MS. Incoming Correspondance File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Johnson, Thomas Christopher. "Christian Science and the Puritan Tradition." Diss. Johns Hopkins University, 1983.

Jones, Mary Hellings. Letter to Mary Baker Eddy. 22 January 1910. MS. Incoming Correspondance File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Kaplan, Amy. *The Social Construction of American Realism*. Chicago: University of Chicago P, 1992. Print.

Kilpatrick, Emmett. Letter to Mary Baker Eddy. 18 July 1910. MS. Incoming Correspondance File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Kilton, Gladys. Letter to Mary Baker Eddy. 28 May 1910. MS. Incoming Correspondance File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Kimball, Edward A. *Answers to Questions Concerning Christian Science.* Boston: Christian Science Publishing Society, 1909. *Google Books.* Web. 24 October 2009.

King, Ethel. Letter to Mary Baker Eddy. 29 January 1899. MS. Incoming Correspondance File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Kleinman, Arthur. *The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing, and the Human Condition.* New York: Basic Books, 1988. Print.

Klosterman, Chuck. "Crazy Things Seem Normal … Normal Things Seem Crazy." *Esquire.* Esquire, 1 July 2005. Web. 2 August 2011.

Knee, Stuart. *Christian Science in the Age of Mary Baker Eddy.* Westport: Greenwood, 1994. Print.

Kilmer, Val and Mike Davis. "Val Kilmer's *Mark Twain and Mary Baker Eddy*—a Film in the Making*." Sentinel Audio Chats*. Spirituality.com. 8 June 2010. Web. 15 October 2010.

Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996. Print.

Latour, Bruno. *We Have Never Been Modern.* Trans. Catherine Porter. Boston: Harvard UP, 1993. Print.

Leavitt, Judith Walzer. *Typhoid Mary: Captive to the Public's Health.* New York: Beacon, 1997. Print.

Lee, Hermione. *Willa Cather: A Life Saved Up.* London: Virago, 1989. Print.

Lerer, Seth. "Hello, Dude: Philology, Performance, and Technology in Mark Twain's *Connecticut Yankee.*" *American Literary History*. 15.3 (2003): 471-503. *Project Muse.* Web. 15 February 2010.

Lindley, Susan Hill. "The Ambiguous Feminism of Mary Baker Eddy." *The Journal of Religion.* 64.3 (Summer 1984): 318-31. *JSTOR.* Web. 12 April 2009.

Lingemann, Richard. *Theodore Dreiser: An American Journey.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1993. Print.

Loving, Jerome. "Theodore Dreiser: The Genius." *American Literary Realism.* 43.1 (Fall 2010): 84-6. *Project Muse.* Web. 5 April 2011.

---. *The Last Titan: A Life of Theodore Dreiser.* Berkeley: U of California P, 2005. Print.

Mack, Edwin S. "The Law in Its Relation to Medicine." *Wisconsin Medical Journal*:199. *Google Books.* Web. 22 January 2011.

Macnaughton, William R. *Mark Twain's Last Years as a Writer.* Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1979. Print.

M'Anally, J.T. "Psychology vs. Medicine." *The Illinois Medical Journal.* 49.7 (January 1900): 306-314. Print. *Google Books.* Web. 22 January 2011.

Mackenzie, Jennie. Letter to Mary Baker Eddy. 13 October 1998. MS. Incoming Correspondance File. Mary Bkaer Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Marcy, Henry O. "Medical Legislation—The Annual Address Before the Association of American Medical Editors." *JAMA.* May 1885: 486-8. *Google Books.* Web. 22 January 2011.

Martin, Clancy W. "The Drunk's Club: A.A., the Cult that Cures." *Harper's Magazine.* (January 2011): 28-38. Print.

Marty, Martin. *Pilgrims in Their Own Land: 500 Years of Religion in America.* Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1984. Print.

---. *Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America.* New York: Dial Press, 1970. Print.

McCard, Charles H. Letter to Joseph Armstrong. 2 May 1904. MS. Incoming Correspondance File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. Letter to Mary Baker Eddy. 11 April 1904. MS. Incoming Correspondance File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

McCrackan, William. Letter to Samuel Clemens. 15 December 1902. Mark Twain File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. Letter to Samuel Clemens. 11 December 1902. Mark Twain File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. Letter to Samuel Clemens. 4 December 1902. Mark Twain File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. Letter to Samuel Clemens. ? December 1902. Mark Twain File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

McClure, S.S. Letter to John V. Dittemore. 6 November 1908. TS. *McClure's* File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

McDonald, Jean A. "Mary Baker Eddy and the Nineteenth-Century 'Public' Woman: A Feminist Reappraisal." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion.* 2.1 (Spring 1986): 89-111. *JSTOR*. Web. 16 June 2009.

Michaels, Walter Benn. *The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism.* Los Angeles: U of California P, 1988. Print.

Miller, Jeffrey W. "'It Was a Pretty High Title': Kantian Ethics in *A Connecticut Yankee.*" *American Literary Realism*. 41.3 (Spring 2009): 263-77. *Project Muse.* Web. 15 February 2010.

Milmine, Georgine. "Mary Baker Eddy: The Story of Her Life and the History of Christian Science." *McClure's*. 28.2 (December 1906): 211-17; 28.3 (January 1907): 227-42; 28.4 (February 1907): 339-54; 28.5 (March 1907): 506-25; 28.5 (April 1907): 608-27; 29.1 (May 1907): 97-116; 29.2 (June 1907): 134; 29.3 (July 1907): 333-48; 29.4 (August 1907): 447-62; 29.5 (September 1907): 567- 81; 29.6 (October 1907): 688-700; 30.4 (February 1908): 387-401; 30.5 (March 1908): 577-89; 30.6 (April 1908): 699-712; 31.1 (May 1908): 16-31; 31.2 (June 1908): 179-188. Print.

---. *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy.* 1905? TS. Milmine Collection. The Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy.* 1904. TS. Milmine Collection. The Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. "Author's Notes." 1904-1905? MS. Milmine Collection. The Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. "Various Research Materials." 1904-1907. MS. Milmine Collection. The Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Mitchell, S. Weir. *Autobiography of a Quack and Other Stories.* New York: Century Publishing, 1905.*Google Books.* Web. 24 October 2009.

---. *Lectures on Diseases of the Nervous System, Especially in Women.* London: J&A Churchill: 1885. *Google Books.* Web. 20 April 2010.

Moore, R. Laurence. *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans.* New York: Oxford UP, 1986. Print.

Morantz-Sanchez, Regina. *Conduct Unbecoming a Woman: Medicine on Trial in Turn-of-the-Century Brooklyn.* New York: Oxford UP, 1999. Print.

---. *Sympathy and Science: Women Physicians in American Medicine*. New York: Oxford UP, 1985. Print.

Morath, Charlotte. Letter to Mary Baker Eddy. 9 January 1906. MS. Incoming Correspondance File. The Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Morgan, J.E. Letter to Mary Baker Eddy. 20 August 1910. MS. Incoming Correspondance File. The Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Morris, Christopher D. "The Deconstruction of the Enlightenment in Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court.*" *JNT: Journal of Narrative Theory.* 39.2 (Summer 2009): 159-185. *Project Muse.* Web. 15 February 2010.

"New York Letter." *Interstate Medical Journal.* 11.10 (October 1899): 534-5. *Google Books.* Web. 22 January 2011.

Norton, Carol. "Lecture in Concord." *Independent Statesman.* (January 5, 1899): 3-4. Alfred Farlow Scrapbooks. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

"Notes Kept by One of Mrs. Eddy's Students from Her Teaching on the Money Thought." *The Christian Scientist.* 1.1 (September 1916): 5-6. *Google Books*. Web. 25 April 2010.

Ober, K. Patrick. *Mark Twain and Medicine.* Columbia: U of Missouri P, 2003. Print.

O'Dell, Julia. Letter to Mary Baker Eddy. 10 February 1900. MS. Incoming Correspondance File. The Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Ogden, C.K. and I.A. Richards. *The Meaning of Meaning*. New York: Harcourt, 1923. Print.

Omohunder, Jessie. Letter to Mary Baker Eddy. 1 February 1910. MS. Incoming Correspondance File. The Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Parker, Gail. "Mary Baker Eddy and Sentimental Womanhood." *New England Quarterly.* 43.1 (March 1970): 3-18. *JSTOR.* Web. 15 June 2009.

Peabody, Frederick. *Complete Exposure of Eddyism or Christian Science: The Plain Truth in Plain Terms Regarding Mary Baker Eddy.* Boston: Author, 1904. *Google Books.* Web. 15 June 2009.

---. Letter to Samuel Clemens. 7 April 1903. Mark Twain Project, Berkeley.

---. Letter to Samuel Clemens. 31 March 1903. Mark Twain Project, Berkeley.

---. Letter to Samuel Clemens. 3 March 1903. Mark Twain Project, Berkeley.

---. Letter to Samuel Clemens. 17 January 1903. Mark Twain Project, Berkeley.

---. Letter to Samuel Clemens. 12 January 1903. Mark Twain Project, Berkeley.

---. Letter to Samuel Clemens. 13 December 1902. Mark Twain Project, Berkeley.

---. Letter to Samuel Clemens. 10 December 1902. Mark Twain Project, Berkeley.

---. Letter to Samuel Clemens. 2 December 1902. Mark Twain Project, Berkeley.

Peel, Robert. *Mary Baker Eddy: Years of Authority.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977. Print.

---. *Health and Medicine in the Christian Science Tradition.* New York: Crossroad, 1988. Print.

Phipps, William. *Mark Twain's Religion.* Macon: Mercer UP, 2003. Print.

---. "Critic's Corner: Mark Twain, the Calvinist." *Theology Today.* 51.3 (October 1994): 416-20.

Pizer, Donald. "Otto Weininger and the Sexual Dynamics of Theodore Dreiser's *The 'Genius.'" Studies in American Naturalism.* 3.2 (Winter 2008): 120-30.

---. *The Novels of Theodore Dreiser: A Critical Study.* Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1976. Print.

Porter, David. *On the Divide: the Many Lives of Willa Cather.* Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2008. Print.

---. "From Violence to Art: Willa Cather Caught in the Eddy." *Violence, the Arts and Willa Cather.* Joseph Urgo and Merrill Maguire Skaggs, eds. Madison: Fairleigh Dickenson University Press, 2007. p. 295-309. Print.

Powell, Lyman. Letter to Lucia Warren. 13 January 1933. TS. Milmine Collection. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. *Christian Science: The Faith and Its Founder.* New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1917. *Google Books.* Web. 24 October 2009.

Powers, Ron. *Mark Twain: A Life.* New York: Free Press, 2006.

Putney, Clifford. *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920.* Boston: Harvard UP, 2001. Print.

Quimby, George A. Letter to Samuel Clemens. 24 May 1907. Mark Twain File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Quimby, Phineas Parkhurst. *The Complete Writings.* Ed. Ervin Seale. Los Angeles: DeVorss, 1988. Print.

---. *The Quimby Manuscripts.* Ed. Horatio Dresser. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1921. *Google Books.* Web. 1 August 2011.

---. "Questions and Answers." 1862. TS. Georgine Milmine. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Reddington, Katherine Wells. Letter to the Secretary of Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy. 1904. MS. Incoming Correspondance File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. Letter to Mary Baker Eddy. 18 August 1904. MS. Incoming Correspondance File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Rosenberg, Charles. *The Cholera Years: The United States in 1829, 1842, and 1866.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987. Print.

"Royalty Takes Up Cult." *The Chicago Tribune.* (February 19, 1900). Clipping. Alfred Farlow Scrapbooks. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Rudnytsky, Peter L. and Rita Charon, eds. *Psychoanalysis and Narrative Medicine.* New York: SUNY Press, 2008. Print.

Satter, Beryl. *Each Mind a Kingdom: American Women, Sexual Purity, and the New Thought Movement, 1875-1920.* Berkeley: U of California P, 1999. Print.

Schiller, Dan. *Objectivity and the News: The Public and the Rise of the Commercial Journalism.* Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1981. Print.

Schoepflin, Rennie B. *Christian Science on Trial: Religious Healing in America.* New York: Johns Hopkins UP, 2003. Print.

Schrager, Cynthia D. "Mark Twain and Mary Baker Eddy: Gendering the Transpersonal Subject." *American Literature.* 70.1 (March 1998): 29-62. *Project Muse.* Web. 28 April 2008.

Schudson, Michael. *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers.* New York: Basic Books, 1978. Print.

Schuster, David G. "Neurasthenia and a Modernizing America." *JAMA.* 290.17 (200)3: 2327-38. *JAMA Online.* Web. 20 April 2010.

---. "Personalizing Illness and Modernity: S. Weir Mitchell, Literary Women, and Neurasthenia, 1870-1914." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine.* 79 (2005): 695-722. *Project Muse.* Web. 20 April 2010.

Shapiro, Johanna. "Illness narratives: reliability, authenticity and the empathic witness." *Medical Humanities* 36.2 (2011): 69. *Project Muse.* Web. 1 April 2012.

Shelden, Michael. *Man in White: The Grand Adventure of His Final Years*. New York: Random House, 2010. Print.

Shermer, Michael. "How Anecdotal Evidence Can Undermine Scientific Results." *Scientific American.* Scientific American, August 2008. Web. 3 August 2010.

Simmons, Christina. "Modern Sexuality and the Myth of Victorian Repression." *Passion and Power.* Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons, eds. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1989. Print.

Simpson, W.F. "Comparative Mortality of Two College Groups, 1945-1983." *MMR Weekly.* 40.33 (August 1991): 579-82. Print.

Sinclair, Upton. *The Profits of Religion: An Essay in Economic Interpretation.* Pasadena: Published by the Author, 1918. Print.

"The Sirdar's Return." *The New York Times.*30 October 1898: 19. *Google Books.* Web. 22 January 2011.

Smith, Clifford P. *Christian Science: Its Legal Status.* Boston: Christian Science Publishing Society, 1914. *Google Books.* Web. 24 October 2009.

Skandera-Trombley, Laura E. *Mark Twain in the Company of Women.* U of Pennsylvania P, 1994. Print.

"Snap Shots at Current Events." *Gaillard's Medical Journal.* 71.5 (November 1899): 725-6. *Google Books.* Web. 22 January 2011.

Specter, Michael. *Denialism: How Irrational Thinking Hinders Scientific Progress, Harms the Planet, and Threatens Our Lives.* New York: Penguin, 2009. Print.

Spencer, Herbert. *Social Statics,* together with *The Man Versus the State.* New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1899. *Google Books.* Web. 15 September 2010.

Sprague, Frank. Letter to Alfred Farlow. 15 July 1905. TS. *McClure's* File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Stahl, J.D. *Mark Twain: Culture and Gender*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1994. Print.

Starr, Paul. *The Social Transformation of American Medicine.* New York: Basic Books, 1982.

Stein, Stephen J. "'Retrospection and Introspection': The Gospel According to Mary Baker Eddy." *The Harvard Theological Review*. 75.1 (Jan 1982): 97-116. *JSTOR*. Web. 16 June 2009.

Stetson, Charlotte Perkins. *Women and Economics.* Boston: Small, Maynard & Co., 1900. *Google Books.* Web. 8 September 2010.

Stoneley, Peter. *Mark Twain and the Feminine Aesthetic*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1992. Print.

Stout, Janis P. "Between Candor and Concealment: Willa Cather and (Auto)biography." *Biography.* 32.3 (Summer 2009): 466-92. Print.

---. *Willa Cather: The Writer and her World.* Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 2000. Print.

Sutton, J.E. "Influence of Mind on Body." *Illinois Medical Journal.* 1.11 (May 1900): 533-38. *Google Books.* Web. 22 January 2011.

Swensen, Rolf. "'You Are Brave But You Are a Woman in the Eyes of Men': Augusta E. Stetson's Rise and Fall in the Church of Christ, Scientist." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion.* 24.1 (2008): 75-89. *Project Muse.* Web. 13 April 2010.

Taylor, Ruth E. "Death of neurasthenia and its psychological reincarnation: A study of neurasthenia at the National Hospital for the Relief and Cure of the Paralysed and Epileptic, Queen Square, London, 1870-1932. *British Journal of Psychiatry*. 179 (2001): 550-7. Print.

"Testimonies From the Field." *The Christian Science Journal.* 24.1 (April 1906): 35-48. Print.

"The Life of Mrs. Eddy." Undated advertisement. Georgine Milmine Collection. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

"True Origin of Christian Science; Documentary Evidence Refuting Mrs. Eddy's Claim That Her System Was Revealed to Her by God." *The New York Times.* 10 July 1904: SM1. *ProQuest Historical Newspapers.* Web. 25 July 2011.

Twain, Mark. *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court.* New York: Barnes and Noble, 2005. Print.

---. *Christian Science.* New York: Oxford UP, 1996. Print.

---. *Mark Twain's Fables of Man.* Ed. John S. Tuckey. Berkeley: U of California P, 1972. Print.

---. *The Innocents Abroad or The New Pilgrims' Progress.* Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1869. *Google Books*. Web. 15 December 2010.

Umansky, Ellen. *From Christian Science to Jewish Science: Spiritual Healing and American Jews.* New York: Oxford UP, 2005. Print.

"Unchristian Noscience." *Lancet.* (15 October 1898): 1000-1001. *Google Books.* Web. 22 January 2011.

Urgo, Joseph R. *Willa Cather and the Myth of American Migration.* Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1995. Print.

Vaughan, Victor C. "An Address Before the Alumni Association of the Long Island College Hospital." *Brooklyn Medical Journal.* 15.3 (March 1901):126-39. *Google Books.* Web. 22 January 2011.

"Verdict Against the Scientists." *The New York Times.* 9 November 1898: 7. *ProQuest Historical Newspapers.* Web. 22 January 2011.

Vetter, Lara. "Theories of Spiritual Evolution, Christian Science, and the 'Cosmopolitan Jew': Mina Loy and American Identity." *Journal of Modern Literature.* 31.1 (Fall 2007): 47-63. *Project Muse.* Web. 29 April 2008.

Vitello, Paul. "Christian Science Church Seeks Truce with Modern Medicine." *The New York Times.* New York Times, 23 March 2010. Web. 30 July 2011.

Wald, Priscilla. *Contagious: Cultures, Carriers, and the Outbreak Narrative.* Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2008. Print.

Ward, Steven. *Modernizing the Mind: Psychological Knowledge and the Remaking of Society.* Westport: Praeger, 2002. Print.

Weinburg, Steve. *Taking on the Trust: The Epic Battle of Ida Tarbell and John D. Rockefeller.* New York: Norton, 2008.

Wilbur, Sibyl. *The Life of Mary Baker Eddy.* New York: Concord Publishing Co., 1907.

---. "The Story of the Real Mrs. Eddy." *Human Life.* 4.5 (February 1907): 11-3; 4.6 (March 1907): 9-10; 5.1 (April 1907): 11-12; 5.2 (May 1907): 7-8; 5.3 (June 1907): 11-12; 5.4 (July 1907): 7-8; 5.5 (August 1907): 9-10; 5.6 (September 1907): 13-14; 6.1 (October 1907): 13-14; 6.2 (November 1907): 14-15; 6.3

(December 1907): 19-21. Print. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. "Glimpses of a Great Personality." *Human Life.* 4.4 (January 1907): 3-4. Print. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

---. "Has Christian Science Met Its Waterloo?" *Human Life.* 4.3 (December 1906): 9-10. Print. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Wilson, Harold S. *McClure's Magazine and the Muckrakers*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970. Print.

Wilson, H. Cornell. Letter to Alfred Farlow. 18 July 1906. TS. *McClure's* File. Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity, Boston.

Woodbury, Josephine Curtis. Letter to Samuel Clemens. 28 November 1905. Mark Twain Project, Berkeley.

---. 5 February 1903. Mark Twain Project, Berkeley.

---. 3 February 1903. Mark Twain Project, Berkeley.

---. *Christian Science Voices: 1885-1897.* Boston: Samuel Usher, 1897. *Google Books.* Web. 15 December 2009.

"Woodbury vs. Eddy." *The Illinois Medical Journal.* 49.5 (November 1899): 223-4. *Google Books.* Web. 22 January 2011.

Woodmansee, Martha. "The Genius and the Copyright: Economic and Legal Conditions of the Emergence of the 'Author.'" *Eighteenth-Century Studies.* 17.4 (Summer 1984): 425-48. *Project Muse.* Web. 25 July 2011.

Woodress, James Leslie. *Willa Cather: A Literary Life.* Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1989. Print.

Zanine, Louis. *Mechanism and Mysticism: The Influence of Science on the Thought and Work of Theodore Dreiser.* Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1993. Print.

Zitter, Emily Stark. "Making Herself Born: Ghost Writing and Willa Cather's Developing Autobiography." *Biography.* 19.3 (Summer 1996): 283-301. *Project Muse.* Web. 25 July 2011.